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PLANNING IN CRISIS



**An illustrated handbook
for delegates to the Conference
Planning in Crisis**

**to be held at the Department of
Environmental and Domestic Science
Polytechnic of Central Grotton
September 5-9**

Prepared on behalf of the
Royal Town Planning Institute by

**Stephen Ankers
David Kaiserman
Chris Shepley**

Although published to coincide with the Grotton conference, this handbook is primarily intended for those who will not be there, but who may be intrigued that such interest is being generated in a place whose very existence came to light only in 1975. Yet anyone who has had to grapple with the British Town Planning system knows Grotton well; and this guide to its more lovable idiosyncrasies is produced in the hope that, like planning itself, it will inspire the disillusioned, enlighten the misguided, and generally make life worth living again.

Legal note: The authors wish to point out that any resemblance in this book to any local authority, living or dead, is purely subconscious.



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Lastly, they gratefully record their debt to the many thousands of planners, civil servants and councillors throughout the country, without whose unwitting assistance none of this would have been possible.

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**Message from the President of the
Royal Town Planning Institute**

What an enormous honour and privilege it is to be asked to introduce this conference handbook – truly the pinnacle of a challenging presidential year! There is no doubt in my mind that this great symposium will surely go down as a millstone in the development of Town and Country Planning in Britain and, indeed, throughout the world. I am particularly delighted that Grotton, of all places, will be acting as host to this magnificent occasion which will (purely coincidentally) mark the 229th anniversary of Capability Brown's famous visit to the town in 1750. I'm sure that Capability, had he been alive today, would have been one of the first to agree with me.

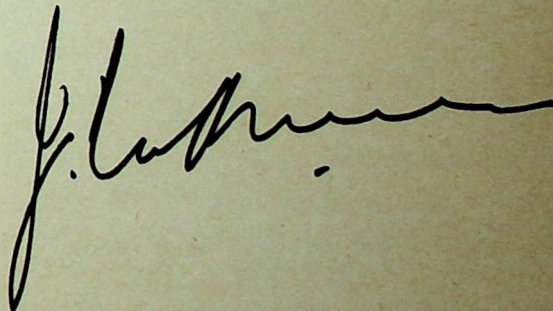
I am determined that my Presidential initiative in allowing this leaflet to be produced shall be a resounding success – and I do mean *success* – we should not be ashamed to say so. I sometimes think 'success' today has become a dirty word (like 'botty', or 'Statutory Instrument'). Yet I well remember, as a young planner, I once met Sir Patrick Abercrombie, and I shall never forget his words to me: 'Go and get on with your work' he said, in that deep friendly voice of his. What good advice that was!

I want particularly to thank Mr T Break, the Grotton County Planning Officer, and his colleagues, for helping to organise the conference. There is a great deal of work in arranging these things. I understand, and in a hard-pressed department it can be the last straw which sinks the camel completely. Yet I know that every effort has been spared on this great occasion and, as the mid-day sun sinks slowly over the horizon, as the pigeons fly wearily home to roost, I feel absolutely confident that this great gathering of ours will be all that the participants expect it to be.

But now the ball is on the other foot; the preliminaries are over and the real business starts. There may be troubles ahead. Sometimes we may be treading on thin water – but I can safely say that a few short days in Grotton will, if nothing else, help you put your own problems in perspective. As Beaujolais rightly said 'Il y a toujours quelqu'un plus mal que vous-même'.

When all is said and done, and when one considers the age in which we live, with its declining standards, increasing violence, organic change and processed cheese, and were it not for the open-ended commitment to broadening ideological commitments within and outside the profession and the increasing rate of change in technology and social and economic attitudes, leading inexorably towards what can only be described as a state of transition.

But things are not always so clear-cut, and all I can do is to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those thousands of people whose untiring efforts have made all this possible. I am only sorry that, owing to prior commitments, I will not be able to be there myself. So it is with great pleasure that I now declare this handbook open!!!



Chapter 1

Grotton in perspective

Grotton 160,000 Map 36 SK00
London 195 Ashton-under-Lyne 10
Valparaiso 7412 Lp8pm \$745pm
Ec Wed Thu Fri Sat Md Sun
***Rat and Handbag** Sludge St 2rm 12P
YBert's Autos Betherley Rd Wol

The precise location of Grotton has puzzled geographers throughout the ages

Despite this impressive entry in the AA Members' Handbook, Grotton is surprisingly little known as a town. Yet this part of the country is special, if not unique, for within the boundaries of the great new County, of which the City itself forms such an essential part, there can be found examples of every planning problem known to man – and a few more besides. It is for this reason that the eyes of the world are now being focused on Grotton as it has enthusiastically (if sometimes uncritically) embraced the many and varied opportunities thrown up by the modern British town planning system. It will be the purpose of this little book to examine how far – if at all – the county's planners have been able to come to grips with the awesome range of difficulties which confronts them.

Clearly, no account of the major planning problems facing metropolitan Grotton would be complete without a thorough analysis of the underlying physical and economic factors which created them – and which makes it such a fitting location for this conference, 'Planning in Crisis'.

Regional context

Grotton lies roughly midway between Venus and Mars, at a crossing point of the River Grime. It was, of course, this commanding geographical position which put Grotton where it is today and, as we shall see, the importance of the town as a communications centre in the nineteenth century owed its origin largely to its favourable location (this strangely circular analysis owes much to the Head of the Department of Geography at Grotton Polytechnic, who produced it shortly before his untimely incarceration in the Weybridge Convalescent Home for the Incurably Academic).

The importance of the Solar system in the history of the area's development can, of course, be over-stated, and Grotton's planners are sensibly restricting themselves to a more limited geographical horizon. Though we may criticize our Victorian forbears for many acts of shortsightedness, surely it is more than just coincidence that Grotton finds itself much closer to London than does Valparaiso¹, even though the latter is a considerably larger town. This is an important achievement, and helps to explain why Grotton is in England and not in Chile. (See Fig 2).

At the more local scale, urban Grotton is all but encircled by extremely boring hills covered in peat-bog and sheep droppings, and this may well account for the somewhat morose disposition of many of its inhabitants. The Pennines (for it is they) rise to a considerable height on the County's eastern flank and have for long provided a cultural and economic barrier between Yorkshire and the civilized world.



¹ See 'A Boy's Wonder Book of How Far it is from One Place to Another', OUP (1932)

Brief history

Thanks to some inspired work by Grotton Museum staff, much is now known about pre-historic Grotton. Sadly, there are few who now remember life in those far-off days, but what had earlier been little more than intelligent speculation by Victorian archaeologists can now be seen for what it was – a load of rubbish. The Eckborough Hoard, for example – long held to prove the Grime Valley's central position on the Amber Route – has finally been utterly discredited. Instead of being a Mesolithic fertility symbol from the lower Danube, this small piece of weathered wood has now been positively identified as a clothes peg dating from about 1921.

The earliest written reference to the town is in the diaries of the Elder Pliny, who decided (uncharacteristically) to take a holiday there shortly after the Roman occupation. He wrote:

'Ides of March, 41 BC¹ In Grottoniensis. Ecce! Haec Caesare afflicus est, quam locus putendus vidi'.

¹ Pliny, of course, could not have been certain that it was BC but history has proved him to have been justified in his assumption

which, roughly translated, appears to mean: 'Suffering Caesar, what a dump'. Nobody knows how long the Romans stayed in Grotton, but few put it at longer than a fortnight. There is at Bletherley what some experts have suggested was a temple to Diana (possibly designed by Pythagoras himself) and the pile of ancient stones on which this theory is based has been listed by the DoE, just in case.

One thing which is certain, however, is that Grotton itself was mentioned in the Domesday Survey, carried out by W Conqueror and Partners in 1086 (and approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1971). Although in some need of revision, this Survey is still used for the purposes of development control, and records that at that time Grotton consisted of 3 feoff-gelds, 8 scutages and a pig; this gives a good idea of its importance in the economic and cultural life of the region soon after the invasion.

Apart from this brief reference, Norman Grotton is shrouded in mystery, as is Mediaeval Grotton. So too is Renaissance Grotton. And Tudor Grotton. We do know that in 1617, according to Leland, King James

visited Bletherley where he shot at a stagge and missed', and Fig 3 indicates the important settlements in the area at that time. But, to all intents and purposes, nothing happened in Grotton until that fateful day in 1773 when the Industrial Revolution began.

As every schoolboy knows, the textile industry in this area owed its beginnings to three essential factors – the swift-flowing streams, whose soft waters made them ideally suited to the washing and bleaching of raw cotton; a generally humid atmospheric regime (which led to a heavy local demand for thick socks), and the ample nearby supplies of loomies, slubbins, wefting rods and so on. This is clearly not the whole story, however, and more research is urgently needed in this important field but, whatever the cause, by 1830 the world had already begun to discover that 'To deal in cotton, tha' must deal w' Grotton' – for the great industrial boom was under way. The new factory system, aided by revolutionary mechanical developments such as Richard Hargreave's spinning jenny and Isaac Shufflebottom's

Fig. 1 The planners have to look at Grotton in its regional context

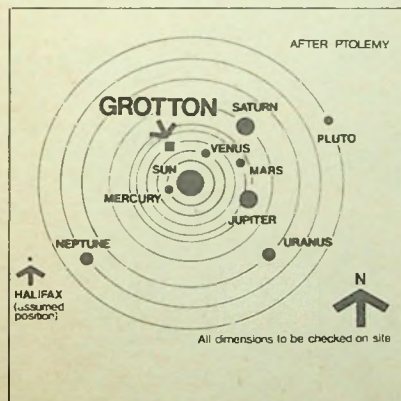
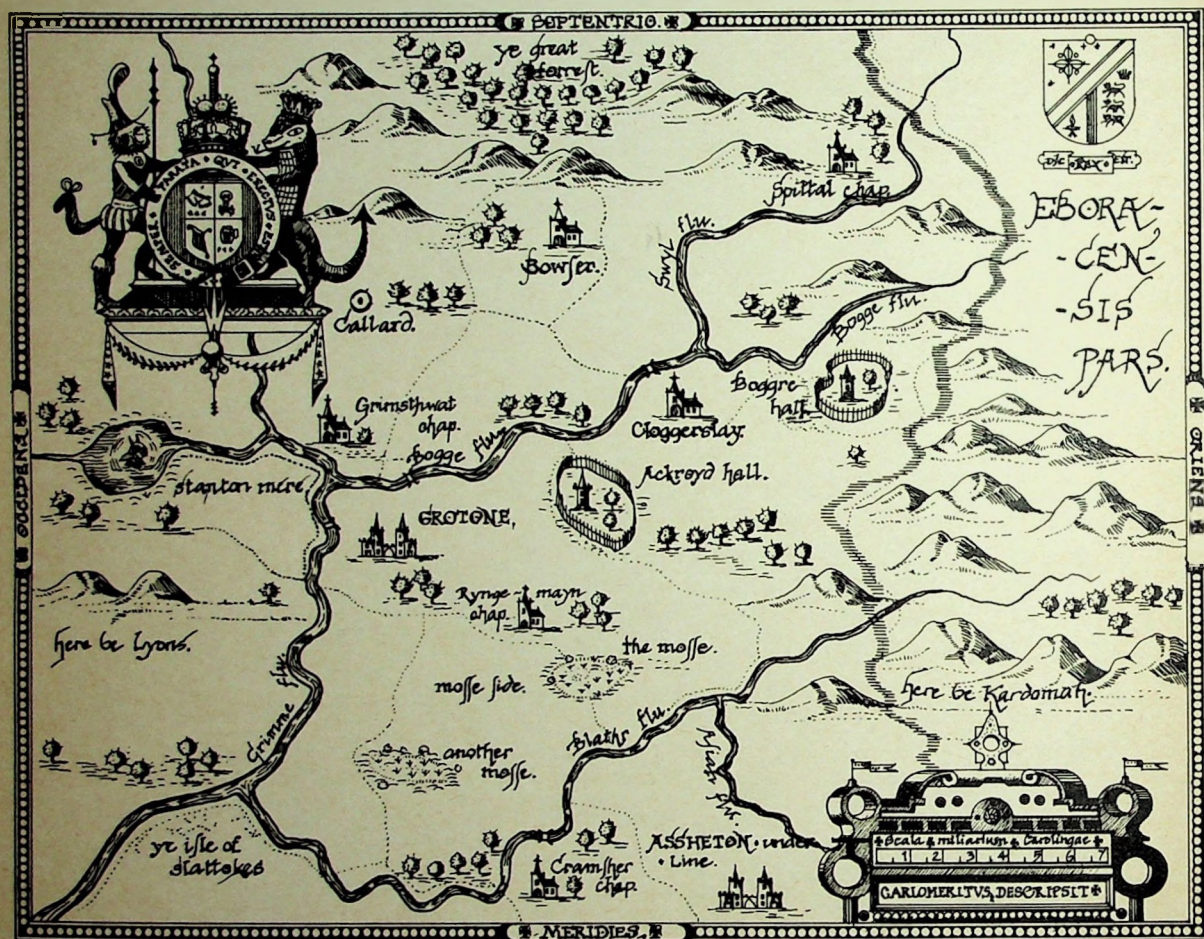


Fig. 2 Grotton is roughly 7000 miles from Valparaíso



Fig. 3
Grotton in the late seventeenth century



improved horizontal thrutching frame, drew thousands to the towns from the surrounding countryside (where, according to contemporary accounts, things were a bit dead anyway). As textile production increased, towns began to specialise (Eckborough made 90% of the world's braces in 1863); at the same time engineering and coal mining were expanding rapidly and the Bogg/Grime Basin soon became the hub of the Empire's industry and commerce. Thousands of cheap houses were built in towns like Grotton, Grimethwaite and Muckthorpe to accommodate the new urban masses – Grotton itself was transformed overnight from an obscure market town to a major metropolis and centre of world trade.¹

What (visitors will doubtless ask themselves as they view the pathetic remnants of this golden age) went wrong? Certainly the growing competition from the Far East,² the great depression of the 20s and 30s, and the unfortunate failure of the Luftwaffe to inflict anything more than superficial damage to the area, all took their toll. It is also possible to point to the decline of the shipbuilding industry – always an anomaly in such a landlocked location – the final

collapse of which now appears to be imminent. Nonetheless, the picture is not one of unrelieved gloom, and parts of the County have been remarkably successful in adapting their economic structure to meet changing circumstances (a specialist firm in Bletherley, for example, at one time supplied all the packed lunches used by construction workers on the Ekofisk Oilfield).

In what way have the recent radical changes in the administration of local government been able to respond to the problems which the area is now facing? To come straight to the point, the creation of the Metropolitan County of Grotton, on 1 April 1974, is widely acknowledged to have been a mistake. Whilst it is true that this has not aroused a great deal of comment (since the same applies to all the other new Authorities) the lasting ramifications of this painful aberration must surely rank for their enormity alongside the Partition of India, the Groundnut Scheme, and the Greater London Development Plan. No-one is saying that the pre-reorganisation boundaries were perfect³ but to many observers, whatever chances the area might have had of extricating itself from the economic and social mire into which, as a whole, it was visibly sinking, may not have been altogether improved by the Local Government Act of 1972, and its offspring – the County, and the five Metropolitan Districts of Cloggley,

Dunromin, Golden Delicious, Grimethwaite and Grotton.

Is this tragic theory justified? No doubt a great many words will be spoken on the subject before the Conference ends, but meanwhile it is hoped that, through this little book, some light will be cast upon the darkness.

¹ It should be noted that Dr Gibbon of the Polytechnic of Central Grotton's Environmental Studies Group, has now informed us that the information from which he prepared Fig 4 has since been found to be inaccurate. In a curious way, however, it says a great deal about the town, and has therefore been retained.

² (A cotton mill had been established in Barnsley as early as 1847)

³ The pre-1974 authorities are shown in Fig 12 (in Chapter 3)

Fig. 4 Grotton's development provides an interesting case study for urban geographers



Fig. 5

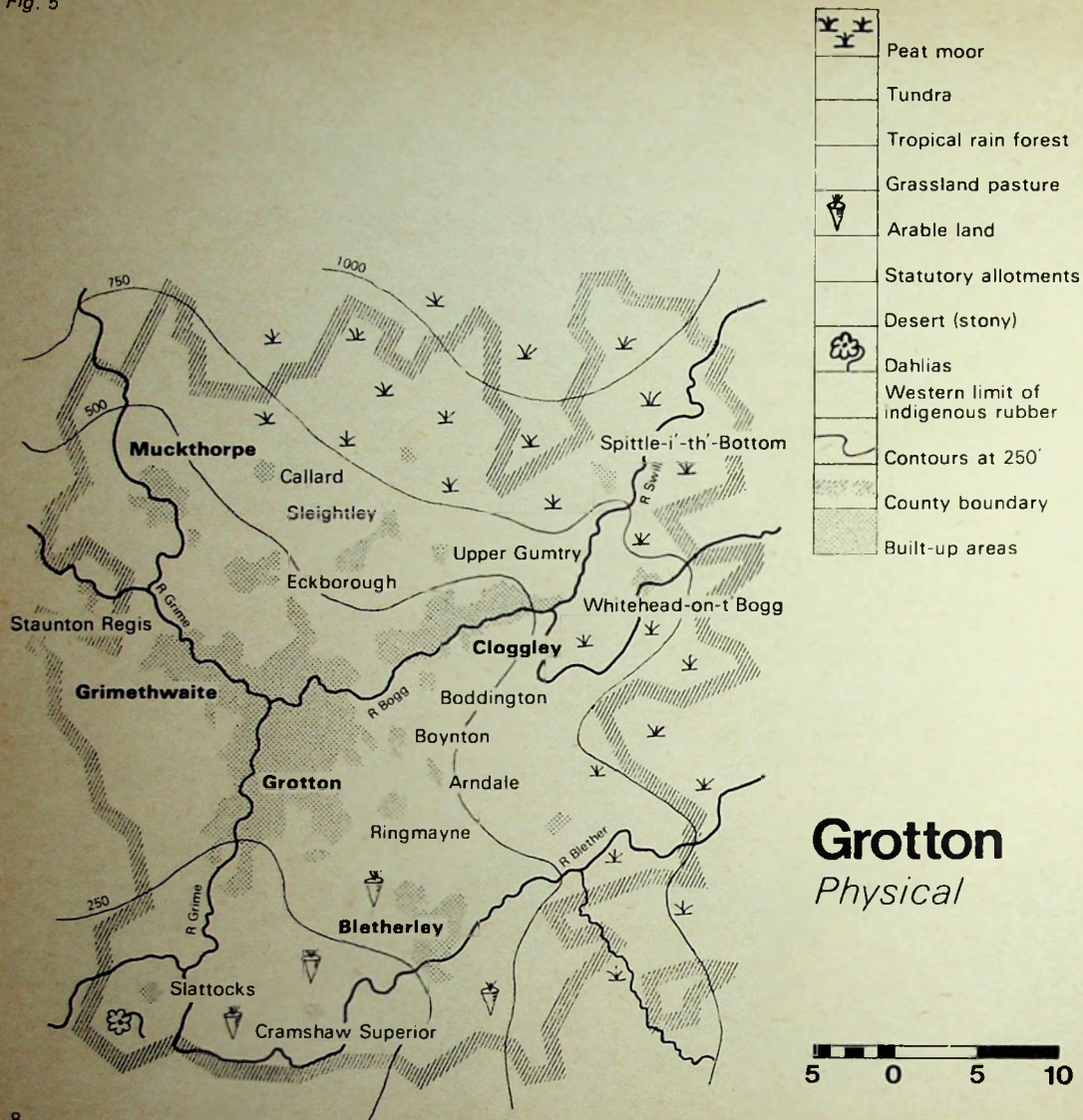
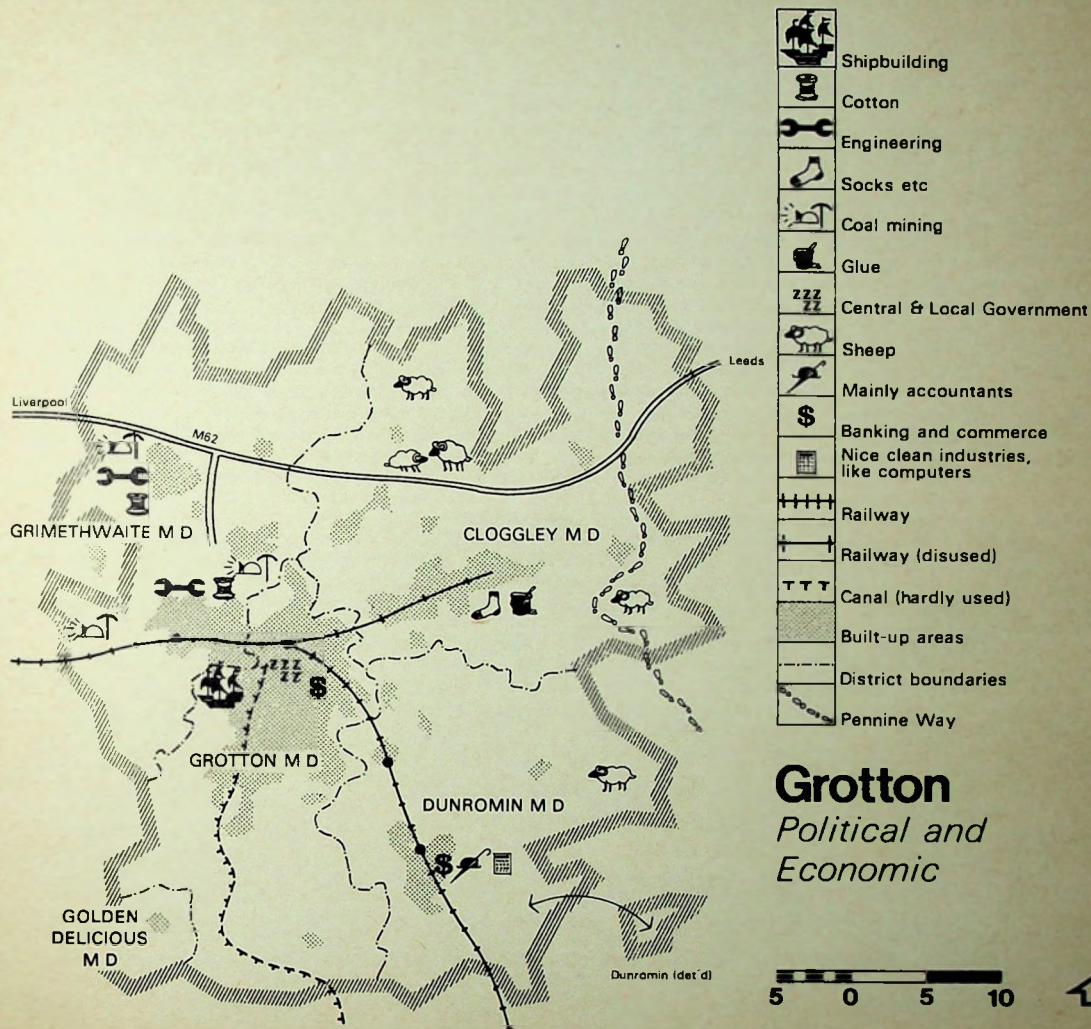


Fig. 6



Chapter 2

Round the Districts

Cloggley MD Population 41,934

Cloggley is a district of many contrasts. With dense urban development sprawling along the Bogg Valley in the south-west, and wild and windswept moorlands in the north and east, this homely Borough also contains pretty villages, 20 pig-farms and the largest glue factory in western Europe. Over half the total area of Cloggley is peat bog, owned by the North West Water Authority (who, according to the District's avuncular Planning Officer, Peter Rabbit, 'are welcome to it').

Here rise two of the County's main watercourses, the Swill and the Bogg (which have their confluence in Cloggley town centre). The head-waters of these streams tumble off the moorland plateau in a number of torrents, or 'downfalls', and their narrow wooded tributary valleys have evocative names such as Boggart Head Clough, Swill Downfall, Down Swillfall, Boggart Swill Headfall and Swill Boggart Clough Head. Brooding over these defiles are the rocky outcrops of millstone grit known locally as 'nebs', chief amongst them being Boggart Swill Headfall Neb and the great Swillfall Head Boggart Neb. Of particular interest to

tourists are the ancient 'Swill Stones', famed in myth and legend (and used as an artillery target by the Ministry of Defence).

As local folk are quick to remind visitors to the area, the Industrial Revolution began in Cloggley on 15 January 1773 – in the afternoon. The actual spot, in the quaint hamlet of Whitehead on t'Bogg, is now a museum devoted to the life and works of Jedediah Ackroyd, the pioneer industrialist who, after many fruitless attempts, finally succeeded in harnessing the Bogg to provide the power for his new two-storey weaving shed. This was the vital spark – the humble precursor to the Ackroyd family's great mills at Grotton, which did so much to establish the area's wealth in the early 19th Century. Ironically, Cloggley itself saw little of this industrial explosion; the inherently unstable ground conditions of much of the area saw to it that no factory remained upright for more than 6 months, and no amount of ingenuity was able to overcome this unfortunate natural handicap. By 1840 Cloggley and its surrounding villages had returned to their erstwhile obscurity, to a calm disturbed only by the ubiquitous flocks of sheep. And that is the way things stayed – until the arrival, late in 1866, of James and Benjamin McMonocle and their glue works.

The McMonocle Brothers had come from a respected Quaker family whose fortune had been built on porridge in Peebles. Keen to diversify into other fields, and fully aware of the markets created by the new industrial masses, the McMonocles chose Cloggley as the ideal base for their model factory. A happy fusion of the twin virtues of capitalism and philanthropy ensured the success of the venture from the start, and within two years Globbo Hygienic Animal Glue was to be found in every home in the Empire. The factory itself was set amidst trees, gardens and recreation grounds and, so that the benevolent McMonocles could always keep a charitable eye on their workfolk, sturdy dwellings were conveniently erected alongside the offal-grinding sheds. Lifelong patrons of the arts, the brothers had retained the services of Benvenuto Trattoria, an unemployed Italian architect, to design the main Boiling Hall in the Byzantine style. This

*Fig. 7
Cloggley's world-famous Mildred Avenue
Conservation Area, with its unique layout
and its bewildering array of architectural
gems*



fine building, completed in 1874, was only taken down in 1969, soon after the merger of Globbo with the Anglo-Japanese Adhesive Co of Osaka.

There are several major planning issues facing Cloggley as it struggles to come to terms with the 20th Century, chiefly the perennial difficulty of controlling the activities of quarry-owners, rural scrap-metal dealers, pig-farmers and barn-converting stockbrokers. But perhaps the most pressing issue is the continuing problem of 'gentrification' of the numerous hill villages which nestle in the folds of the uplands. In particular, Spittle i' th' Bottom (now a Conservation Area) suffered much in the late 1960's from insensitive speculative development and exhibits a range of architectural solutions which, though frequently eye-catching, somehow fail to achieve that unity of time and space which the developers, Messrs Bettaspec, led the previous authority's Development Control Sub-Committee to expect.

Another problem for the planners to worry about, and one which has caused a great deal of local concern, is the projected

expansion by Anglo-Japanese Adhesives, right in the town centre. The 350 foot aluminium-clad giblest-sifter, which would be clearly visible from all over the District, is at the centre of the present furor. Gavin Penruddock, a flamboyant Cornish poet and self-appointed expert on environmental matters, has already vowed to glue himself to the Japanese Embassy should the Secretary of State (who has called in the application) decide to give the Company the go-ahead. The County Council are in something of a dilemma over the case. They are acutely aware of the controversy over the scheme but, equally conscious of the 9 extra jobs which the £40m expansion will bring to the area, they have, in fact, given it qualified support – suggesting, however, that the sifter should be adequately landscaped to protect the visual amenity of the town.

Last year Cloggley reached the final of 'Jeux sans Frontières'.

Fig. 8

Local developers have been pressing Cloggley to release this white land for housing

Dunromin Population 70,109

'Then thread the sunny valley laced with streams.

'or forests wide, and th' o'er shadowed brims

'of simple ponds, where idle shepherd dreams.

'And streaks his restless limbs'

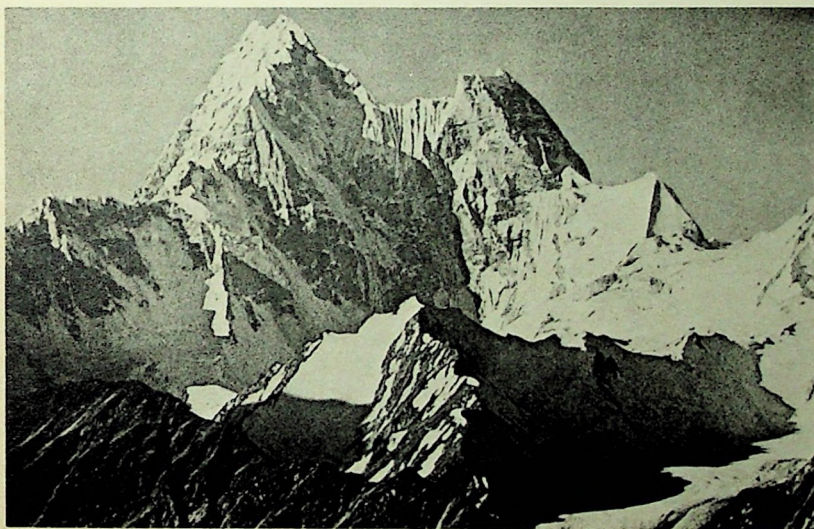
Shelley did not, in all probability, have Dunromin in mind when he wrote these glorious lines¹ – but he might have done. For it is Dunromin, more than any other part of the County, which gives the lie to the notion that the north-west of England is all muck and clogs and brass bands. Indeed, with its verdant pastureland, its stately homes, famous golf-courses, public schools, and literary connections², Dunromin is, at first sight, something of an oasis in what is otherwise a rather ordinary Metropolitan County.

At the centre of things is Bletherley. This rapidly-growing town has traditionally looked towards the Cheshire Plain for its cultural and economic ties, rather than to the less cultivated influences of industrial south-east Lancashire. Even the coming of the railway from Grotton failed to integrate the town fully into the life of the nearby conurbation. Today, Bletherley folk (of whom, incidentally, only 9% actually work within the District) vehemently resist any suggestion that they have anything in common with their somewhat less refined neighbours – still less that they are in any way dependent on the rest of Grotton for anything other than employment, transport, entertainment, sport, cultural services and the like.

Dunromin is quick to point out the ancient origins of Bletherley itself – though to the casual visitor, little evidence exists of the mediaeval core, upon the splendours of which the tourist brochures tend to dwell at some length. Indeed, thanks to the impressive commercial redevelopment of the 1960's (which earned Bletherley the title of 'The Croydon of the North') the only

¹ (Shelley, in fact, didn't write them at all)

² Mrs Gaskell's husband (Mr Gaskell) used to train his whippets near Bletherley



buildings left which appear to date before 1920 are a much re-sited Market Cross, said to belong to the 13th Century (although not quite enough of it remains for any positive conclusions to be drawn on this point), and a branch of the National Westminster Bank in what used to be the old Fish Market – even this having been substantially rebuilt in the Georgian Style in 1959.

As it happens, this somewhat elusive architectural heritage has not precluded the designation of some 79 Conservation Areas within the District (many of which overlap), and the formation of over 200 Civic and Amenity Societies. This clearly reflects a keen awareness among Dunromin's residents of the value of conservation, and also their desire to limit any further intrusions by urban newcomers – particularly those whose background might prevent them from appreciating the area's qualities to the full.

While the amazing boom in speculative building in Bletherley did not please everyone, there is no doubt that it has brought a prosperity to the area not generally found in the rest of the County. The most obvious symbol of Bletherley's growth is the Snodgrass Centre – a massive 15 acre development containing, amongst other things, no less than 2.5 million square feet of office space and what Messrs Megabild Property Corporation describe as 'a centrally-located out-of-town family hypermarket', a new concept in convenience shopping, providing for the needs of the local community with three car spaces for every visitor. This huge scheme was the brainchild of Lieut-Col A J C Hartley-Wintergrene, the Leader of the Council, and reflects Bletherley's (and now Dunromin's) philosophy of 'providing the entrepreneur with the right incentives'. Even he, however, has been obliged to concede that the Snodgrass Centre has somehow failed to realise its full potential. With its sad record of structural defects, its frequently-troublesome air-conditioning system and its four miles of windswept upper-level concrete walkways, it is hardly surprising that the only occupants of the office space are the 26 civil servants of the East Anglian Hydro-Electricity Commission.¹

Unfortunately, (and for reasons with which the Fraud Squad are believed not to be entirely satisfied), some £22 millions of the ratepayers' money have been invested in the Snodgrass Centre, and this threatened at one time to bring the Council to the verge of bankruptcy. However, by a skilful manipulation of the rates – and a courageous set of austerity measures, such as the sacking of the Social Services Department and a new and revolutionary policy of emptying dustbins on householders' lawns – disaster has been averted.

Some critics of the Snodgrass Centre have tentatively suggested that part of the problem lies in the apparent willingness of the Council to grant planning permission for virtually any form of commercial development, wherever it is located – which is why five super-stores have opened on the edge of Bletherley town centre within the last 18 months. However, in contrast to the vacant offices (and the now empty department stores which line Bletherley's once-bustling High Street), Dunromin has been particularly successful in attracting the type of commercial buildings which would benefit most from the natural amenities of the area – speculative office developments, for example, which, because of the careful attention to landscaping which generally accompanies such schemes, tend to enhance the qualities of the Green Belt in which many of them seem to be located.

Golden Delicious Population 6,728

Tucked quietly away at the south-western extremity of the County,² nestling inconspicuously in that part of the fertile plain which (mercifully) still separates Grotton from Greater Manchester, but to all intents and purposes inaccessible from either, lies the evocatively-named Metropolitan Borough of Golden Delicious. Based on the rather less romantic-sounding settlement of Slattocks, Golden Delicious was, as the world now knows, quite simply, a left-over. It seems that the hard-pressed Boundaries Commission, understandably fatigued (and not a little depressed) after their efforts at sorting out the new boundaries in the Bletherley area, misread the pre-war motoring maps from which they had been working and committed a fateful error – one from which the County is never likely to recover. Even to the casual visitor, the sense of isolation is immediately apparent, and no-one, least of all the Borough Council, doubts that it would probably be better for all concerned if Golden Delicious had not been created at all.

Nonetheless, history gives some credence to the idea of the area's separation from the rest of the County. Indeed, its ancient name was 'The Isle of Slattocks', which derived from its position close to the confluence of the Grime and Blether Rivers, and the modern-day Golden Delicious still has all the appearance of not really belonging anywhere. With very few exceptions, the whole of the Borough consists of pasture land – though there are some areas, mainly on former peat mosses considerably drained by Napoleonic prisoners of war, given over to arable crops and, of course, to Slattocks' famous dahlias. Two miles south-west of Slattocks itself is a notable *roche moutonnée*, or it could be a drumlin.

During the Second World War much of what is now Golden Delicious was developed by the US Air Force as a vast landing strip with, alongside, an enormous factory devoted to the production, for the American armed forces, of chewing gum and bromide tablets. Thus, the Slattocks base, whilst it

¹ (It was originally intended to remove this little-known branch of the Foreign Office to Central Lancashire New Town, but nobody could find it)

² (Student planners are directed to look in the bottom left-hand corner of the map)

could not actually claim to have won the war for the Allies, at least helped to guarantee the honour of half the female population of Europe. Now the Americans have gone, much of the airstrip has been ploughed up, and the factory stands gaunt and empty – despite a few abortive and half-hearted attempts to change it to a ‘home and garden centre’, or a cash-and-carry warehouse, or some such thing, all of which have been opposed by the County Council, largely on the grounds that County Councils usually oppose this kind of thing.

Slattocks itself is very small. The Church of St Rita is thought to have the poorest acoustics in England.

Grimethwaite Population 92,143

It is difficult to imagine that, less than 150 years ago, the Grime was a clear and swiftly-flowing river, renowned throughout the area as the finest salmon stream south of the Lune. For not since 1888, when a solitary frog was seen gasping for breath at the weir above Muckthorpe, has anything entered that awful watercourse and lived.

The Grime Valley, in short, is not a pretty sight. There can be few parts of the country displaying, within one small area, such a bewildering concentration of environmental disasters – three-quarters of the Borough’s housing stock lacks five or more basic amenities (22%, for example, have no television); 83% of the total area is taken up by spoil-tips, slag-heaps, chemical waste dumps, clay-pits, disused railway lines, and redundant sewage works; and much of the remainder consists of derelict cotton mills and coal-mines.

It seems almost inevitable that such a blighted landscape should leave a mark on its hapless residents. Indeed, the good people of Muckthorpe and Grimethwaite (the

principal – and rival – commercial centres of the District) have a reputation for surliness and bloody-mindedness second to none in the country. So unloved is this miserable place that all four of the gypsy sites made available by the Borough Council remain totally unoccupied, because gypsy representatives have objected to the squalid living conditions and unsocial habits of the local people.

Grimethwaite is the County’s power-house. The coal mines, though in decline, still provide 17% of the available employment, with cotton-spinning and mechanical and electrical engineering (which are also declining) not far behind. Muckthorpe, of course, is famous for its disinfectant products, for which there is naturally a strong local demand (carbolic soap was first synthesised here during the First World War), and has at least managed to diversify to some extent – a factory has recently opened making a revolutionary new pelvic truss, to the development of which the Government has given its full support.

Local people have a saying, ‘Wur th’s muck i’ th’ grittlin’, yer’ll nobbut get tha’ weftin’ treddled’, and that’s as true now as ever it was. As a result, a fierce and continuing rivalry exists between Grimethwaite and Muckthorpe – a rivalry which acquires a particularly robust character following the twice-yearly meeting of the towns’ Rugby League teams. The two towns, though only six miles apart, have always been at each other’s throats, and this long-standing mutual antipathy was bound to spell trouble for the new authority even before it was created. Grimethwaite, the larger of the two, naturally favoured ‘Grimethwaite’ as the name for the Metropolitan Borough; Muckthorpe, after careful consideration, opted for ‘Muckthorpe’. After failing to agree on over 100 possible names, such as ‘Grimethorpe’ and ‘Muckthwaite’, (and even ‘Thorpethwaite’ and ‘Muckgrime’) the newly-elected Council submitted for the consideration of the Secretary of State a number of imaginative compromises – including ‘Woodpark Valedown’, ‘Seaview’, ‘Shangri-La’, ‘Switzerland’ and ‘Three

Fig. 9

Golden Delicious: A general view



Sewage Works'. The Secretary of State, who in those days was a busy man, thumbed through his AA Handbook to the appropriate page and, finding Grimethwaite to be the only settlement shown on that part of the map, decided on it as an eminently suitable name for the new District. (It was thus only by chance that the reorganised authority avoided being called 'page 127, K3').

Mention must be made of Staunton Regis, whose determined residents had succeeded at the last possible minute in extricating themselves from the embraces of the new, Metropolitan, Grimethwaite. The effect of this was, at a stroke, to deprive the pubescent authority of one-tenth of its population and 60% of its rateable value, but the lucky burghers of Staunton (who had been preparing to move out in large numbers) joyfully hailed their success as a victory for common sense and good taste.

Politically, Grimethwaite itself has always leaned heavily to the left (this is after all the constituency of Sid Spriggs – 'The Barmy Bolshevik', as he is known to Tory back-benchers), whereas Muckthorpe has traditionally followed a more independent line. This has inevitably led to problems in the new authority. In fact, there are only two issues upon which both sides of the Grimethwaite Council are always in total agreement¹ – the first is the need for the speedy winding-up of the County Council, and the other is their joint determination to reduce unemployment which, with the exception of the Sicilian town of Lamacari, is the highest in the EEC. While the major effort has naturally been put into the former objective, economic initiatives have not been ignored and thousands of books of matches have been given away in an attempt to win new jobs – so far with only limited success.

There is undoubtedly a feeling of defeat about Grimethwaite. An all-pervading sense of gloom and despondency fills the air in a way which, even more than the concentrations of sulphur dioxide, brings tears to the eyes of the residents and visitors alike. No-one seems to care any more – in fact when the Government recently

announced that a vast area to the west of Muckthorpe was to be used as a tip for spent nuclear fuels, only 3 people signed a petition, and one of those was in favour.

Grotton City Population 160,861

What can be said about Grotton that has not already been said in countless school geography textbooks, in reports of Royal Commissions and in decisions by the Ombudsman? The City of which Oscar Wilde once said 'Is this it?' is alive and well and beginning to come to terms with the twentieth century. Though the other four Districts are always ready to debate the point, Grotton is clearly the economic and social focus of the new County, and the services provided by the City Centre make it second in importance only to a number of other towns in the Region. As we have already seen, the original impetus for the City's growth was provided by the textile industry in the early part of the last century, although there was for a long time previously a connection with the corsetry trade which gave the area a firm foundation for the industrial explosion which was to take place. (Flemish weavers and Huguenots probably deserve a mention here).

It was the development of the canal and railway systems which enabled Grotton to take advantage of the growing world markets for cotton goods. John Bottomley ('Blind Jack of Grotton'), the myopic and illiterate son of a country blacksmith, was one of many early pioneers who helped to put Grotton on the map in this way. A totally self-taught engineer, this wayward innovator was responsible for the design of the world's first wholly artificial canal – later to become the Blether Navigation – which happily remains to this day as an impressive monument to Bottomley's genius. Although the great man narrowly failed to ensure a connection between his engineering masterpiece and any other navigable waterway, others were quick to see the potential of the new idea and Grotton very soon became an inland port of some significance. From the 1850's, however, the rapid growth of the railways began to displace the canal system from its pre-eminence – and once again, Grotton found itself at the centre of intense speculative activity as the new technology spread. While some ventures were almost bound to meet with only limited success (the ill-fated Grotton, Barnsley and Bideford

¹ (Muckthorpe members would say there are three)

Junction Extension Railway being perhaps the best-known example), there is no doubt that Grotton's new connections to the expanding national network were inextricably linked with its amazing growth during this period: the town's population grew from only 3,145 in 1801 to 24,600 in 1861, and, by 1901, to a staggering 207,436.

Grotton is still essentially a Victorian town, as its many fine buildings bear witness. Naturally enough, however, the Victorian legacy is not confined to the warehouses, offices and public buildings of the city centre.¹ The endless rows of bye-law housing in the inner suburbs still leave the City with the 'Coronation Street' image for which it is known throughout the world – and which it for long attempted to eradicate by the selective (if not always sensitive) use of the bulldozer. City Councillors and planners would now be the first to accept that the comprehensive slum clearance and redevelopment programmes pursued so

forcefully in the 1950's and 1960's were not the complete success for which they had earlier hoped – and the recently-announced demolition of the twin 25-storey blocks of walk-up split-level maisonettes (known affectionately to local residents as 'Sodom and Gomorrah') suggests that a totally new approach to the problem is being tried out.

Indeed, the 'Grotton Experiment' is beginning to attract national attention, even before the pilot scheme has been completed. This novel technique of improvement to the existing housing stock involves, in an attempt to speed up the process, no less than four hundred council workmen moving the occupants into a Portakabin in the street and, according to the critical path programme worked out with the aid of a computer by Messrs Huntley and Palmer (management consultants of Pimlico), completely renovating the property – by providing damp-proof courses, new window frames and doors, inside lavatories, replacing all plumbing and wiring, installing under-floor central heating, building a two-storey kitchen/ bedroom extension and landscaping

the back yards – all within the space of a little over ninety minutes. The City Council has calculated that, with a modest increase in staffing levels, something like 30,000 homes can be saved from demolition every year by this process.

Partly as a result of clearance, but also because of a declining birth rate (the reasons for which could form the subject of another interesting book), the population of the City has fallen steadily since the First World War. The Registrar-General's mid-year estimate for 1978 indicated that the decline was continuing (if anything, at a greater rate than ever), although this trend has been firmly denied by the City Council who suggest, for reasons entirely unconnected with the annual Rate Support Grant Settlement, that, in arriving at an estimated population for the town of 160,861, the Registrar-General somehow contrived to print the correct figure upside-down.

The City has been only moderately successful in attracting new investment to counteract the continuing decline in the traditional industries of textiles, engineering and shipbuilding. The clothing trade survives, a prime example of industrial inertia – though but a shadow of its past greatness (it will be recalled that Jedediah Ackroyd's fortunes were founded on his brilliant plan for supplying the Russians with coarse cotton long-johns during the Crimean War – an act of patriotism for which he was later knighted – and which undoubtedly guaranteed Grotton's world-wide reputation in the field of specialised underwear). For the shipbuilding trade, however, there now seems no hope. There is little doubt, as foreshadowed by almost every Government White Paper on the subject since the war, that the City's unfavourable inland location will continue to militate against further attempts to provide Tyneside, Hamburg or Osaka with any real competition – certainly as far as the potentially lucrative super-tanker market is concerned. Consultants retained by the City Council to investigate alternative uses

¹ For a thorough survey see especially Nairn's Grotton, thesis at West Byfleet Technical Coll (unpubl) (in fact, unfin).



Fig. 10 AD 76: These two Grottonians were probably caught unawares by the sudden eruption of Kinder Scout

for the semi-derelict Docklands area originally concluded that a demand existed – or could be created – for mini-super-tankers, up to about 25 tons, and they recommended that the Blether Navigation should be widened by 60 feet and, if possible, extended to the Irish Sea at Southport. The City Council has recently abandoned the idea, however, largely on the grounds that the consultants report was too long.

In an attempt to maintain its dominant position in the region, Grotton has had recourse to a wide variety of financial and political strategies. In particular, and as a simple way of keeping the City constantly in the eye of the EEC, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Hepplewhite, maintains a small flat in Montmartre. While the ratepayers have yet to see any concrete benefits from this, there is little doubt that throughout Paris (and therefore Europe) the name of Grotton is synonymous with drive, generosity and, occasionally, drunkenness. On a broader scale, the City has made certain that it has been able to take the fullest advantage of every form of financial assistance available to it, whatever the source, from the Community

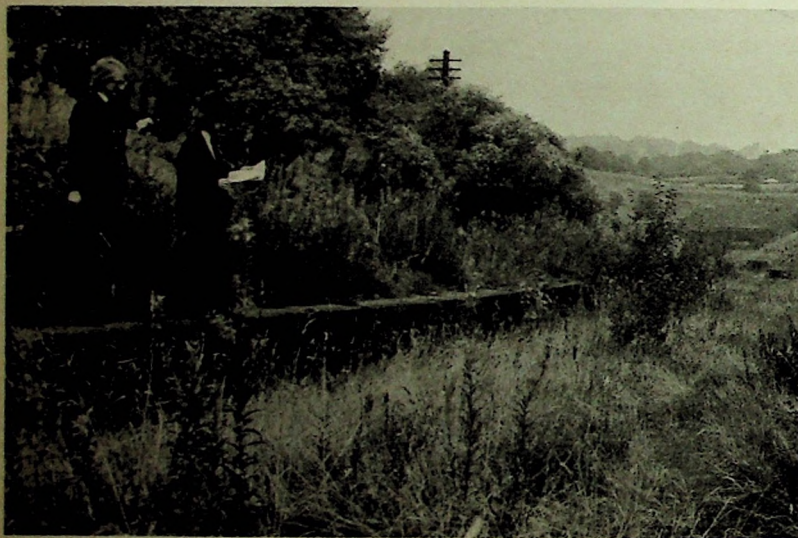
Land Act to the Temporary Assistance to Intermediate Areas (Processed Meat) Financial Provisions Act, brought in in 1974.

Differences between the City and the County Council are, perhaps, inevitable, but so far in Grotton, serious arguments have been restricted to transportation, strategic planning (including policies relating to office and shopping developments, the Green Belt, housing land availability, car parking, industrial strategies, etc), refuse disposal, consumer services and the arts and recreation. It is probably fair to say that the arrival of the County Council upon the scene in 1974 did little to increase Grotton's self-confidence – something which it had begun to lose as early as 1948 when its Gas and Electricity Departments were wrenched from its grasp, and which more recently had reached crisis proportions when its Waterworks and Passenger Transport Departments were also wound up and handed over to the new regional bodies. Something of a siege mentality appears to

*Fig. 11
The future of Brunel's Grotton Sludge Street station must now be in some doubt*

have developed since the passing of the Local Government Act 1972¹ – accompanied by a growing conviction in the Town Hall that the County Council's sole statutory function is to get in everybody's way.

So, somehow or other, the City of Grotton (a title which nothing on earth would persuade it to abandon) has to face its new, if somewhat diminished, responsibilities in the sub-regional scheme of things. Is it equal to the task? Only time will tell. One thing is certain, however: steps will need to be taken to avoid any repetition of the kind of unseemly occurrence which marred the celebrations to mark the centenary of the City's Act of Incorporation in 1875. Then, it will be remembered, a likeness of Peter Walker, specially cast in blancmange, was ceremonially consumed by a team of former Lord Mayors before a large and somewhat undisciplined audience.



¹ This spirit of independence is nothing new in the City – the Corporation campaigned bitterly against the 1909 Housing, Town Planning etc Act and eventually ignored it. Instead they promoted the Workpeoples and Lower Orders (Grotton) Dwellings Act of 1912 – out of which grew the pioneering Osborn Garden Suburb (1919)

Planning with tiers

'Let's be clear of one thing. The County Planning Department's got a job to do and, by God, we're going to get stuck in the moment we find out what it is'.

Little did T Break (Grotton's County Planning Officer) realise, when he uttered these courageous words late in 1974, that he would still be needing all his powers of tact and determination some five years later. Interviewed on a regional television programme as recently as March 1979 Mr Break said: '..... up the flagpole. Look, you mustn't believe everything you read in Government White Papers. Relationships between the County and Districts in my area are absolutely first class, and we never have the slightest difficulty, or not much, and anyway I can't tell you about it because they'll only get worked up again – naturally, alright, they're a pain in the neck sometimes, bloody impossible in fact – whoops! Did you say this was going out live?'.

The events leading up to this outburst are worth close investigation, and have their roots in the 1972 Local Government Act, which split the planning function in two¹. This was the piece of legislation accurately described by the Minister of the day as '..... an Act between consenting local authorities in public' and not surprisingly, there is still widespread confusion amongst members of the public – and even more so amongst planners themselves – as to what it is all about². Delegates to the conference who are still unsure may be assisted by the following notes kindly prepared by a technician in the County Planning Department³.

- i) There are some Counties and, almost as important, some Districts.
- ii) Counties are meant to prepare a Structure Plan, (whether the Districts like it or not) (most of them don't). This takes a very long time. It is supposed to help the Districts to prepare Local Plans (but it doesn't).
- iii) The Districts are meant to prepare Local Plans, but some of them find it more convenient not to bother, and there is not

1 Readers will be aware that these arrangements only apply to England and Wales. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Greater London are, as usual, rather different.

2 It is rather odd that planners experience such difficulty, given their amazing ability to grapple confidently with almost every other branch of human endeavour.

3 But for a fuller study see Desmond Heap – 'Outlines of Sylvia Law' 17th Edition 1978. Buncce & Berner, London.

much anybody can do about that.

iv) Counties can prepare Local Plans too, but generally speaking the Districts won't let them.

v) The County likes it when the District does a Local Plan, because this gives them the chance to tell the District why what they're doing doesn't fit in with the Structure Plan.

vi) The public can object to everything, whoever does it, and they do.

vii) Planning applications can be dealt with by the County or the District (or, if necessary, both).

viii) The general rule is that Districts can decide any applications they want to, unless they think they shouldn't. Most counties think that this is quite reasonable except that *they* should decide which applications the Districts can decide they can decide.

Where Counties decide that Districts *aren't* properly deciding which applications they can decide, they can (if they're quick) decide to direct the Districts to decide *how* they should decide the ones they decide not to ask the County to decide (provided they decide to direct the District to decide to *refuse* it). Some people want to alter these arrangements.

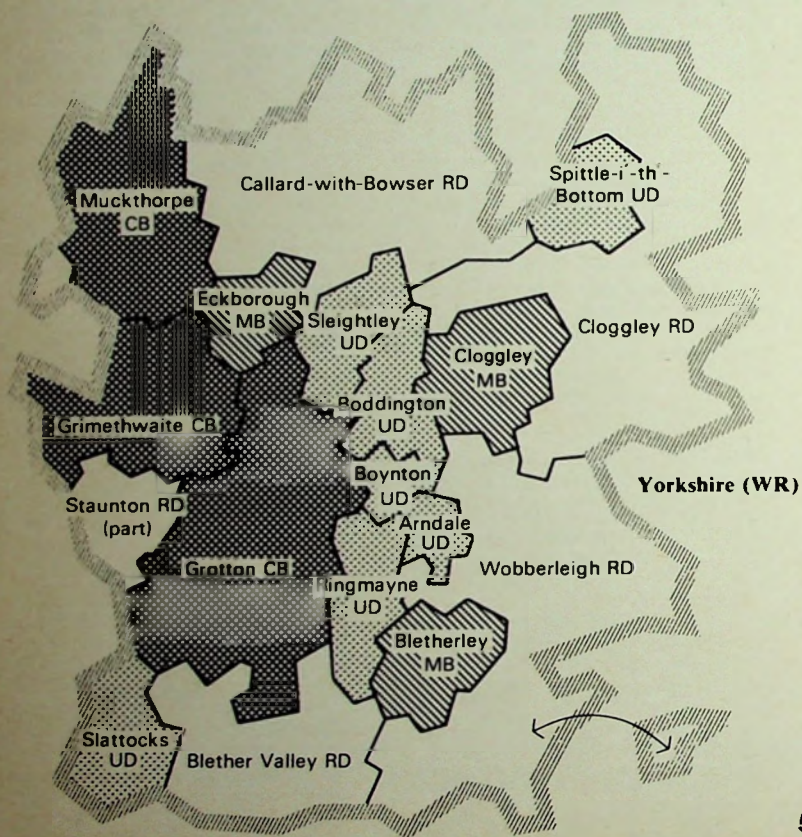
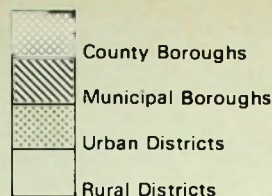
ix) The Department of the Environment can do exactly what it likes, but generally tries to avoid it.

This system, as we will see, works as well as it does because of the good sense and professionalism of those who have to operate it. Life, after all, must continue; planning applications need deciding, the stocks of Letraset must be replenished, more sophisticated ways round Flexitime remain to be discovered. In Grotton, as elsewhere, a thoroughly pragmatic approach to the job in hand ensures that petty squabbles only break out when there aren't any really serious arguments to settle. Naturally enough there are occasional 'genuine differences of emphasis',⁴ but this is perhaps inevitable with any system. The vitally important factor at work throughout the County as a whole, from the most exalted typist right down to the lowliest Planning Committee Chairman, is the will, the burning determination, to succeed.

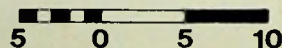
4 (Local Government jargon for 'bloody great rows')

Fig. 12

Pre-Reorganisation Grotton: the old Local Authorities were sadly swept away in 1974



Grotton
*Before
Reorganisation*



As the conference approaches, there is talk in some quarters of 'organic change' in local government. While some would support this and others would not, there is a general agreement that no-one understands what it means (although Grotton City Council appear to support the idea – they have recently announced that they hope soon to take over defence).

For the time being, let us return to the Grotton of today and to the men who have to make the system work – after all (as Shelley put it) 'everybody's different'. Just how prophetic these words were will now be revealed, as we relate our interviews with the six Chief Planning Officers of Metropolitan Grotton, exactly as they happened

Roland Pratt (56) Grotton City Planning Officer

It has to be said that Mr Pratt seemed to view us with some suspicion as we tiptoed into his office. It had taken over ten minutes to find him, on the third floor of the east wing of Dogberry's magnificent Grotton Town Hall but, once there, and as our eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, we could not conceal our wonderment at what we saw. The room was a vast, dark cavern, fully twenty feet high, the only source of natural light being a filthy stained glass window to the Prince Regent Gardens elevation. From the walls hung huge canvases in oils, depicting former Mayors of the City in their ermine and scarlet cloaks; massive and ancient bookcases lined the room on all sides, tightly packed with municipal records, acts of parliament, statutory instruments, bound volumes of learned journals and unopened copies of 'The Planner'. Indeed, the man himself was difficult to locate in this cathedral-like setting, but there he was, grey-faced, staring bleakly at us over his half-moon glasses, almost hidden behind his immense mahogany desk.

Mr Pratt's view of the world was, in the circumstances, not surprising. Here was a man, the Chief Planner of a great city, and in every way a worthy successor to the eminent Sir Hubert Buchan, PPRTPI, (who had fought for, and finally achieved, the separation of the Planning and Cleansing Departments in 1962), forced to accept the imposition of an additional, clearly unnecessary, tier of local government – and, whatever might be his professional inclinations, acutely aware of the desire of his members to act as if the Local Government Act had somehow failed to reach the statute books.

'D'you want to know what I think?' he said, rising with difficulty out of his well-worn leather chair and walking over to the window. 'I'll tell you what I think. We didn't need a County Council when we took control of the Grotton Gas Company in 1893, or when we built the Balaclava Street tram depot in the twenties. We got on perfectly well without being called a Metropolitan District or whatever it is. How do you think we managed all those years to knock houses down and

build roads and schools and libraries and things? I'll tell you how we managed. We didn't need a County to help us, that's how we managed'.

Mr Pratt flicked repeatedly at an imaginary speck of dandruff on his Grotton Corporation tie and turned to gaze absently at a yellowing diploma which had been clumsily sellotaped to the wall. 'Look', (at this point he wrenched his glasses from his nose, strode across the room, flung open a cupboard, took out a large cardboard box and tipped its contents on to the floor). 'The Draft Structure Plan. Look at it, for heaven's sake.' We explained that we *had* looked at it. 'There you are, then!' he exclaimed triumphantly. 'Why can't they leave it to us to get on with?'

We thought we had understood the City Council's attitude to the County by now. It was quite clear as we left that Queen Victoria, whose likeness in alabaster stood majestically alongside the west door, found the whole thing most distasteful.

Peter Rabbit (50) Borough Planning and Rents Officer, Cloggley

Our visit to Peter Rabbit was like a breath of fresh air after the dank corridors of Grotton Town Hall. He greeted us warmly as we pushed down the plywood doors of the Portakabin which the Cloggley Council had provided for his department on waste ground adjoining the Corporation Yard in Back Peebles Street. With a practised leap, he neatly side-stepped the splintering woodwork and, courteously helping us to clamber over the debris, led us into his office.

Peter Rabbit was round and balding, yet with a boyish charm which made it difficult to believe that he had been in local government for almost 35 years. 'Cocoa?' he said, as he swept a pile of planning applications off an old tea-chest and offered us a seat. Gratefully, we accepted, and asked him how he was enjoying life. 'Oh, mustn't grumble, y'know. Tomatoes have been rotten this year, but that's the same everywhere, of course. (Can I have the spoon back? Ta). No, things aren't so bad, all things considered. Biscuit?'. He tipped the contents of an old tea-pot on to a leafless rubber-plant which stood under his

desk and, as he looked through his slippers for a pipe-cleaner, we asked him if he shared Roland Pratt's general view that the County was unnecessary. 'I don't like Mr Pratt saying things like that,' he replied. 'Come to think of it, I don't like Mr Pratt at all! No – it's nonsense. They're great blokes down there – I've nothing but admiration for what they're doing, I mean, how can you go wrong? I let them have all the nasty planning applications, all the appeals, and they still keep coming back for more! Look, quite frankly, anything Ted Break does is OK by me – I mean, after all, we're both in the same model railway club, and that must mean something surely?'

He shouted through a gap in the partition for his secretary to come and make some more cocoa, and didn't seem at all surprised when she suggested, rather euphemistically, that he might attend to the matter himself. He beamed nonetheless, shrugging his shoulders at us with avuncular resignation and, with a little wink, produced a carton of milk from a plastic carrier bag which hung on the back of the door. As he searched for a spoon (it was in his top pocket)-Rabbit expounded at some length upon his admiration for the County and all its works – indeed going so far as on point as to suggest that life would be even simpler if the County Council took over a few more of Cloggiey's functions.

As we watched him padding off down the corridor to rinse out the mugs, we marvelled at the fact that, even in these cynical times, a man of such staggering naivety could find himself at the top of his professional tree.

Ron Blunt (40) Borough Estates and Planning Officer, Grimethwaite

Well before we arrived in Grimethwaite, we were psychologically prepared for our interview with the forceful Ron Blunt. We knew, for example, that this was the man who, according to T Break, 'went through two secretaries a week' – the man whose standard response to anyone who failed to agree with him was to grab them round the throat and squeeze. A keen amateur car-breaker, Blunt's entry into local government

had been by the rather unconventional route of professional wrestling and a day-release course in Estates Management at Bootle Polytechnic.

His office, occupying an annex to the former Muckthorpe Town Hall, was like nothing we had ever seen before. To say it looked like a bomb site would be an understatement. The room was groaning with mountains of discarded papers and files, unemptied waste-paper baskets, at least 3 broken chairs, cracked tea-cups, overflowing ash-trays, empty cigarette packets – to say nothing of the spare tyres and car batteries, and what seemed to be complete exhaust systems for at least a dozen vehicles.

Although Blunt himself was nowhere to be seen, we were quite sure (from the occasional crash of packing cases) that he was prowling around somewhere in the middle of this appalling carnage. We considered diving in after him, but thought better of it when we noticed that he had somehow contrived to split his large oak desk right down the middle, leaving a wide crack from one end to the other (which he appeared to use for the purpose of storing thick and rather unappetising sandwiches). We made a mental note, on seeing this, that it would be unwise to cause this man any unnecessary aggravation. But how could we obtain his views on two-tier local government without actually mentioning the County Council?

As it happens, we were saved the trouble – Blunt suddenly burst out from under a pile of tea-chests, brandishing a letter from County Hall which apparently dared to suggest that a meeting might be arranged with Grimethwaite to discuss the Structure Plan. 'Who the hell do these twerps think they are?' he exploded, 'jumped-up little twits with their la-di-da policies, poking their bloody noses into things they don't understand. Just wait till I' To our horror, the raging Ron Blunt now picked up a steel filing cabinet that had been lying on its back behind his desk, raised it above his head and hurled it through the window with a strangled cry of 'Get stuffed, the lot of you' – and we knew it was time to leave.

Relationships between Grimethwaite and the County still, we concluded, left something to be desired.

Nigel Smoothe (42) Director of Environmental Services, Dunromin

A greater contrast between the brutish Ron Blunt and the debonair Nigel Smoothe would be hard to imagine. It was quite clear that the Dunromin councillors had chosen their Planning Officer with great care – educated at Oundle and Oxford, and with a successful spell at the Foreign Office before entering the profession. Smoothe was a charming man in every way. Slipping his attractive secretary quickly from his knee, he rose to greet us as we entered his softly-lit office, soon offering us a selection of aperitifs from a Louis XIV drinks cabinet. Settling back in his chair, and pausing only to ensure that his Havana was well lit, Mr Smoothe treated us to a rare insight into his own approach to the delicate matter of County/District relations. 'Let me put it this way, gentlemen', he oozed. 'I would be the last person in the world to suggest that the County Council's contribution in the field of planning was anything other than helpful – indeed essential – in relation to those less fortunate authorities, many of whom regrettably lack the many economic and social advantages of a Dunromin, and who in addition find themselves sadly unable to respond adequately to the challenges and opportunities which confront them. For our part we would do nothing to stand in the way of Mr Break and his colleagues in their pursuit of any legitimate interests of the County Council – we feel sure, however, that they would be the first to accept that Dunromin need have no occasion to place any demands upon them in this respect.'

Mr Smoothe eased himself to his feet to replenish our glasses, and then posed elegantly beneath a large photograph of himself and his delightful family being presented to the Queen at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. 'Naturally, we have our differences. It is true, for example, that, with much regret, we have had to inform the County recently that the Structure Plan, while always interesting to read from most points

of view, wasn't quite what we were hoping for, and I doubt if we'll be able to find a permanent place for it in our own scheme of things. It goes without saying that T Break and I have had many a useful chat about this, and I think I can say that we have a deep-seated and mutual understanding for our respective positions on the matter – indeed, I would go so far as to say that the differences between us are more real than apparent.

As we slowly drank our way through the afternoon, the air becoming gradually thicker with the relaxing clouds of smoke from Mr Smoothe's fine cigars, we began to appreciate just how fortunate Dunromin was in having such a remarkable man to guide them. Here was no mindless and dogmatic rejection of the role of the County Council in town and country planning matters – on the contrary, it was an *eminently reasonable and carefully-considered* rejection of the role of the County Council

Ken Dafft (age unknown)

Planning Officer, Golden Delicious

It took us over three days to locate the elusive Mr Dafft – not, we are certain, because he was trying to avoid us, but simply because no-one in Slåttocks (the principal – indeed, only – town of Golden Delicious) had the remotest idea where the Planning Department was. In fact, when we stumbled upon the District's Information and Publicity Office (something we had earlier mistaken for an abandoned horse-box) the lugubrious assistant had assured us that his Council had not thought it necessary to establish a planning function and were we sure we were in the right town?

We had realised something was wrong when the Planning Department's address, as it had appeared in 'The Municipal Year Book', turned out to be a floral roundabout in front of the Slåttocks and Stubbins Joint Industrial and Equitable Co-operative Society's funeral parlour. After much fruitless searching, and two extraordinary nights at the Slåttocks Hotel (residential), we finally remembered a handwritten letter, a copy of which had been given to us by Mr Break earlier. This had arrived unexpectedly at County Hall early in 1976 and had read:

Golden Delicious Metropolitan
Slåttocks Urban District Council

Council Offices
32A Cedric Street
Slåttocks Lane.

your attention
referred to
date 3rd March 1976



Ken Dafft
K. Dafft
Planner

Dear Mr Break,

I note you have set up a County Council, and you have of course written to me on a wide range of planning issues over the last couple of years. I will try to reply to these as soon as possible, but I'm getting a bit snowed under at this end, quite heavily, what with all this reorganisation and one thing and another, and in the meantime it might be best if you carried on without me for the time being.

With best wishes
Yours sincerely

K. Dafft

P.S. don't say I'm busy – there seems to be no time

Fortunately, this letter did carry an address – of sorts. 32a Cedric Street was a small room over a betting shop, and was in darkness when we arrived. Having located the entrance, we were about to knock when the door opened and to our astonishment a small, middle-aged man, carrying a heavy suitcase, began to tip-toe backwards on to the landing. We stepped to one side, aware that this was not the best moment to make our presence known. Very quietly Ken Dafft (for it was he) pulled the door to, heaved a deep sigh of relief, drew his coat about his ears and, turning quickly, fell down the stairs.

It was impossible for us to conceal our presence any longer and we rushed down the staircase to his assistance. Before we could reach him, however, this extraordinary man had leaped to his feet and fled into the street, shrieking something like 'Back in a couple of days'. We never saw him again.¹

¹ The County Council have recently been informed by the Ombudsman that, until further notice, all communications with Golden Delicious should be directed through him

Ted ('T') Break (53)

Grotton County Planning Officer

And what of T Break himself? Were we to find Councillor Stanley Grimshaw's description of him accurate: that this was a man whose true qualities had never been fully appreciated – indeed had yet to be identified? How was he bearing up, this giant among men, the one-time enfant terrible of the planning profession? For we could never forget that this was the same T Break we had read about as students in the infamous case of Kwikbild Limited versus Wolverhampton Corporation. Break it was who, as a young planning officer, had unhesitatingly recommended temporary permission for the demolition of a Listed Building

There had been no stopping him since those heady days. Posts had quickly followed in Cleethorpes, Ecuador, the Shetlands and, briefly, as planning consultant to Messrs Kwikbild. We realised with some emotion that we were shortly to be in the presence of one of the country's most controversial Metropolitan County Planning Officers.

We had actually arrived early for our appointment. Surprisingly, perhaps, in such a vast complex as County Hall (situated rather precariously over an incised meander in a particularly sluggish and unlovely stretch of the River Bogg, on the edge of Grotton City Centre) we had had little difficulty in finding the Planning Department. Even from the busy street outside, the sound of Structure Plan policies being generated was quite unmistakable.

The Department was strategically situated on the seventeenth floor, and when we stepped out of the lift and paused to admire the view of the City far below, we reflected for a few moments on the heavy responsibilities which lay on the shoulders of the man we had come so far to see.

But an immediate difficulty presented itself as we turned back to the matter in hand: where was T Break's office? After casting round the lift lobby for some indication as to which way our path should lead, we finally spotted a small notice selftaped to the opposite wall. On close inspection we discerned the words:

PL I N G E P A R M N T

and with some relief, soon found ourselves in a large reception area. In a corner of this room stood a desk marked 'Enquiries' which contained not the familiar young lady ploughing remorselessly through her nails, but a large sign reading:

PLANNING DEPARTMENT. YOU PROBABLY WANT THE DISTRICT. TURN LEFT OUTSIDE COUNTY HALL THEN RIGHT JUST PAST THE ABATTOIR - GROTTON TOWN HALL IS ON CORNER OPPOSITE FROG AND TRUMPET

This was not, of course, a great deal of help in our present situation. Selecting one of the passages which led from the enquiry desk, we set off, anxiously aware that it would not do to keep the County Planning Officer, of all people, waiting. For what seemed like hours, we walked along the thickly-carpeted corridor, in a silence disturbed only by the sound of mileage claims being adjusted, the muffled cries of

private architects being insulted, and technicians cursing in the queue for the photo-copier. It soon became clear that we had no idea where we were.

Something had to be done. Finding ourselves opposite a door marked 'Development Control' we plucked up courage, knocked, and went in.

We were in a huge open-plan office, in odd corners of which slumped yellowing Swiss Cheese plants and rampant grape-ivy, and small groups of young people who we could only conclude were planners. From where we stood by the door, it was possible to discern several quite distinct groups - some seemed heavily involved in watering tomato seedlings, others were staggering round the office under the burden of hundreds of planning applications, and a few - if not clinically asleep - were apparently on some distant plane of the astral sub-conscious from which only the thought of lunch seemed likely to dislodge them. One group, however, stood out from all the rest, and this we approached in an effort to obtain assistance. There were about ten of them altogether, fighting furiously over a rather battered copy of Planning magazine, and copying down details of jobs in the Orkneys, Devon, and even (in one case) London.

The first three people we asked had never heard of T Break. Two thought they knew who he was but had never seen him, and none of them were sure if they could find his office. In desperation we stopped a young technician (who was on his way out of the office holding a leaking Rapidograph at arm's length to avoid spilling ink on his filthy jeans) and he obligingly offered to help.

The young man took us down the corridor whence we had come, past the machine selling beef-flavoured coffee, back to the enquiry desk, and into the lift lobby. 'I think you go up those stairs,' he said, and went into the Gents to wash his pen. We rushed up the stairs - and there at last we saw a door marked 'Office of the County Planning Officer'. Looking hastily at our watches, we cleared out throats, tapped quietly and went in.

We naturally entered the neat reception area, adjacent to the great man's lair, with

caution - indeed, with mounting apprehension, since we were immediately met with a tirade of strategic obscenities being hurled across T Break's office, rending the air and echoing and re-echoing down the long corridors of the eighteenth floor. Taking our courage in our hands we quietly advanced, beginning to wish nonetheless that our interview with Mr Break had been conducted by post.

'YES?'

The blood-curdling shriek sent us diving for cover beneath a table full of leaflets which lay in the centre of the room. Only when we finally dared to look in the direction from which the hideous sound had come did we see who, or what, had been responsible for it. For there, strategically positioned behind the door, and sitting bolt upright like some prehistoric stork, was the County Planning Officer's secretary, the formidable, the notorious, the dreaded Euthanasia Proode. 'YOU'RE LATE' she screeched as we struggled to get out from under the table, desperately trying to re-arrange the leaflets which we had sent tumbling to the floor in our panic and confusion. We wondered whether or not to point out the difficulties we had encountered, but quickly thought better of it, and apologised instead.

As it happens, (Miss Proode seemed positively to gloat) 'the County Planning Officer cannot see you just at present, since he is in conference. So you'll just have to wait, won't you?' We thanked her for her assistance and sat down, grateful for the opportunity to recover our equilibrium, and to plan our escape route, should the necessity arise. There was not a great deal to look at as we waited. But as Miss Proode got on with her magazine we began to build up a picture of what was going on in the room next door. It seemed that Mr Break was having a meeting with one of his colleagues about some of the finer points of the Stucture Plan - and both evidently were finding the whole thing rather hard going.

'We can't say *that!*' we heard him wail, in a tone of anguish County Planning Officers generally reserve for meetings with the Department of the Environment. 'Good God,

Fig. 13
The County Planning Officer's week - a typical example

man, the Districts will skin us alive if we try that on The other man said something like '.... bloody cock-up if you ask me', and the room fell silent for a few moments. We glanced idly at the fading Dutch Elm Disease poster, and the neatly-framed Diploma of Merit from the British Pre-Stressed Concrete Federation (presented to the County Council in recognition of their widespread use of the material in the construction of County Hall itself), and had little to do but wonder whether Miss Proode

bred scorpions in her spare time.

The minutes passed, with nothing but an occasional shriek of sarcastic laughter from the adjoining room (and, at one point, a distinct smell of burning). After about half an hour, and just when we were thinking about leaving, there was a sudden flurry of activity from Mr Break's office. As the argument flared up once again, we heard chairs being moved backwards at great speed, sheaves of paper being ripped apart and, as a horrifying climax, what we were later to learn was the

T Break - County Planning Officer

Appointments week commencing April 21st

Mon 9.00 11.30 2.00 3.00 6.30	Management Team <i>Take Pills</i> <i>At Gebbra - re Structure Plan</i> <i>put back to Tues C.P.</i> Ombudsman - re Yew Tree Farm Business <i>(Suit from cleaners)</i> Maj. Harbringer-Grudge (Country Landowners) - re Sleightley Green Belt Planning Committee <i>Did we ever tell them about Y. Tree Fm.??</i>	Thu 9.30 1.30 2.30 4.00 8.00	<i>Miss P:- do they know about Yew Tree Farm?</i> <u>R.T.P.I. People</u> - re Book on Grotton Blether Valley Steering Committee Pre-meeting Blether Valley Steering Committee <i>Mr. Gebbra re Structure Plan (URGENT)</i> Scouts N.B. 1 WEEK TO MISS PROODE'S BIRTHDAY
Tue 11.00 12.30	<i>am. At Gebbra - Site Plan</i> Radio Grotton - re Structure Plan <i>Miss P - send Gebbra to this, pl.</i> Lunch - Rita (Le Petit Pois) (Then "Site Visits")	Fri 9.10 12.00 for 12.30 3.15 <u>4.30</u>	Fire Practice (If fine) Lunch - Luigi Valpolicella, Anglo-Italian Property Corp. (Royal Grotton Hotel) Forrestry Commission <i>what the hell's this about??</i> <i>Mr. Gebbra re. Structure Plan</i>
Wed 9.00 11.00 1.00 1.30 2.00 3.30 5.15	Blether Valley Steering Committee Pre-Mtg. Pre-mtg. N. Cumbrance (D.o.E.) - re Structure Plan Lunch - Mrs. Break (Golden Egg) Pre-meeting for C.E.P.C.W.P. Chief Executive's Pelican Crossing Working Party <i>Mr. Gebbra re Structure Plan</i> R.T.P.I. Branch Meeting - Inter-Authority Decision Making <i>O God.</i>	Sat	<i>You're joking!</i> (Wife's mother for weekend) <i>Do I normally go to this one?</i>

sound of a Principal Planning Officer being slowly strangled by a man twice his size. This proved too much even for Miss Proode. She took something out of her drawer and, indicating to us that we should on no account leave our seats, strode purposefully into Mr Break's office, fortunately leaving the door open just enough for us to catch a glimpse of what was going on inside. Miss Proode was seen to march up to the County Planning Officer (who was by now jumping up and down upon the prostrate form of his hapless colleague) and, with considerable dexterity, to deliver a fearsome right hook to his abdomen. Mr Break dropped like a stone. 'Come along, Mr Trubshaw,' said Miss Proode to the unfortunate object of her boss's wrath, 'get yourself down to Occupational Health for a nice cup of tea.' And with that, she hoisted the groaning Trubshaw to his feet and ushered him out of the office.

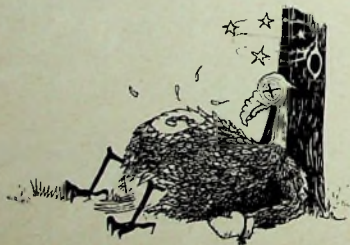
'Mr Break will see you shortly,' she said, when she returned a few moments later, and she disappeared into Mr Break's office. We heard her drag the County Planning Officer across the room, slap his face a couple of times and, in quietly reassuring tones, say 'It's time for your pills, Edward.' It was clear that there was only token opposition to this suggestion and Miss Proode quickly reappeared at the doorway and beckoned us to enter. There was no turning back now.

We found T Break propped up in his chair, his eyes closed, visibly panting for breath and it seemed best not to trouble him for a moment or two. His secretary, however, silently encouraged us to begin our interview and, with a whispered 'he'll be alright now', returned to her desk. Suddenly, the great man opened his eyes, stared at us in some puzzlement for a few seconds and said suspiciously 'You're not from the Ombudsman, are you?'. Having quickly reassured him on this point, we reminded him of our mission and moved quickly to the business in hand. How was the Structure Plan getting along? How were relationships with the Districts? What was morale like among County staff? How was the Chief Executive's Corporate Management system working out? Did he understand the latest Government circulars on local plans? - so many

questions upon which we were keen to get T Break's reply, and so little time to deal with them.

As it happens, before he could reply, Miss Proode re-entered with an urgent request for the County Planning Officer to go down to a Capital Estimates Underspending Monitoring Team meeting, a summons to which he responded with surprising enthusiasm, adding 'Perhaps we could have a chat on the 'phone?'. Smiling nervously as he edged past us, he stuffed a handful of blue tablets into his mouth, threw open the door of his office and fled.

Happily, we were later to learn that this disturbing episode was in no way characteristic of T Break and that we had simply caught him at a moment of understandable stress, brought about by his sudden realisation that morning that the Structure Plan was the responsibility of the County Council.



How is the County Council run?

A good question. But how to set about finding the answer? Although many articles have been written about the corporate system evolved (and recently patented) by Grotton County Council, opinions as to its merits differ to an alarming degree. The reason for this is not hard to find: only one man at County Hall fully understands the intricacies of corporate management, and that man is the Chief Executive, Mr Tony Monopoly.

In view of the critical importance of the subject to any understanding of how decisions are taken at the strategic level, Mr Monopoly was invited to submit a brief paper for inclusion in this handbook. This he kindly agreed to do, and it is reproduced in full below. (It will be appreciated that his views do not necessarily reflect those of the County Council – or, indeed, of anybody else).

The development of a truly corporate approach to management in the Local Authority of today demands a subtle fusion of

personal initiative, leadership, and, above all, sensitivity to the needs of others. Those who have worked closely with me will be well acquainted with these qualities, I feel sure, but I was surprised to find on moving to Grotton¹ that there was some initial opposition to the concept of a corporately-run authority. However, with a lot of hard work we have been able, between all the Chief Officers and myself, to create an atmosphere of complete mutual understanding and trust. None of us would pretend that the slow process of building up the County's corporate machine to what it is today has been achieved without some snags (indeed, several resignations) along the way. But this is not altogether surprising – I find that there is very often an in-built conservatism among planners, engineers, treasurers, estates surveyors, personnel officers and the like, revealing itself in an arid and all-pervading departmentalism which only a strong Chief Executive's Department can hope to break down.

Strengthening my own staff, then, was the first (and, in my view, essential) step along the road. There is no doubt in my mind that, without the Principal Budgeting Control Officers, the Assistant Monitoring Advisors, the Policy Co-ordination and Programme Group (which I chair) and, above all, the many officers who go to make up my Corporate Performance Review Unit, I would not be able to maintain the close links with other Departments which are so essential, and which my fellow Chief Officers have come to expect. Where did we go from there? Naturally, I called for a comprehensive Programme-Area-Based Position Statement which, of course, indicated an urgent need for corporate planning on a multi-dimensional basis. I quickly drew up a Draft Programme Matrix and requested the other Departments to produce an in-depth Key-Area Budget-based Issue-Analysis by Decision Field, as a matter of urgency. The

¹ Mr Monopoly, although previously Managing Director of the Consolidated Biscuit Company of Slough, was no stranger to local government before moving to Grotton, since he once attended a course at the School for Advanced Urban Studies and had a cup of coffee with Tony Edisson.

Fig. 14
The Chief Executive in an unguarded moment



development of the Corporate Plan itself was of course no easy matter, but within a few weeks, I was able to devise a planning, programming and budgeting formula that was simple yet sophisticated, a rational system which, perhaps for the first time in local government, allowed priorities, objectives and targets to be assessed and, if necessary, ignored. Once done, this allowed me to advise my colleagues in the other Departments how they should organise their workload, without my being embroiled in the day-to-day responsibilities which can so often get in the way of good management.

It was unfortunate that the meeting of the Policy Committee which agreed all this had to be called at such short notice in August 1976, when most of the other Chief Officers were on holiday. This was unavoidable, but was more than justified by the unequivocal support I received from the Committee, which was of great assistance when subsequently I called a meeting of the Management Team at which I explained the system to Mr Break and the others.

It is a measure of the success of our approach in Grotton that it has recently become necessary to increase the number of staff in my Department fairly substantially, particularly on the monitoring side. But I am sure it is generally accepted that, with so much to gain, the odd 70 or 80 extra people is neither here nor there. I would certainly support such a view – indeed, the Policy Committee have now agreed to a further increase in my establishment so that we can help the Consumer Services Department, which is being run down.

Naturally, no system, however well-conceived, can possibly run smoothly without a proper organisational framework to ensure a degree of consistency. At the centre is my Management Team, which is of course a forum for those Chief Officers whom I feel have a contribution to make, to become involved in the management of the Authority as a whole. This meets several times a week, generally without warning, and always without an agenda. This has a number of advantages, but particularly saves my colleagues from being encumbered with a whole lot of factual information before the

meetings, and I find this helps us to make rapid progress on a whole range of issues.

In addition to the Management Team there are several Programme Area Teams, each chaired, of course, by a senior member of my Department (or, if he is on holiday, by another senior member of my Department). There are those who say that 47 inter-departmental teams is too many, and represents an unnecessary burden, but – as I believe I said at the recent Manila Conference of SCERSC¹ – it seems to me that unless you do the thing properly it is simply not worth doing. I suppose it's largely a question of having the courage of one's convictions.

With hindsight, I think one or two of the details could have been handled differently, and we are, of course, always looking for ways to make improvements. But in almost every case, I found that any opposition which did arise was simply due to misunderstanding on the part of the Chief Officers concerned. For example, the reason for suggesting that town planning should be brought under my control was simply to increase efficiency and in no way did it represent a criticism of Mr T Break, for whom I have the highest regard as an administrator. Nonetheless (while I can hardly condone it), I can quite understand why he reacted the way he did at the time, and as soon as he feels able to make an apology in open court, we can consider the matter closed.

To conclude, there is no doubt that this comprehensive system of corporate planning enables the County Council to take the right decisions quickly, at the same time as providing me with a highly effective channel through which I can tell the other Chief Officers what they were. You must judge for yourselves. But as you walk about the County during conference week, as you look at what we have managed to achieve in the 5 short years since reorganisation – the Blether Valley bridge path and the Cloggle Road/Rig Street Junction realignment spring to mind – you will not need to ask yourselves 'How was all this possible?'

Further comment seems superfluous.

1. Society of Chief Executives of Relatively Small Counties. (Incidentally, Mr Monopoly was the Society's Social Secretary from 1975 to 1977)

Organisation of the County Planning Department

Naturally, the internal organisation of the County Planning Department has not remained unaffected by the overall management arrangements devised, and rigorously implemented, by the Chief Executive. Nevertheless there are many elements of the Department's structure (see fig 15) for which T Break is entirely responsible, and which are loosely based on something he remembered from a management course at Frinton he was once sent on against his will.

Mr Break likes to think of everyone in his Department as people – indeed, he is reputed to know all of his Assistant County Planning Officers by name – and this helps him to ensure that all his staff pull in as many directions as possible. The Department is now down to a total establishment of 238, which still leaves it some way short of the Association of County Councils' recommended standard of 1 planner for every 3 residents, and Mr Break has made repeated attempts to increase his staff to help him tackle the various jobs he is expected to do.² The Department is divided into 5 sections and the breakdown is as follows:

Structure Plan

*Assistant County Planning Officer
Al Gebbra*

Al Gebbra's difficulties in producing the Structure Plan are detailed elsewhere. Remarkably, his tiny team of 18 planners and a technician have produced, or so it is estimated by the leader of the Information Group, over 700 tons of draft policies since 1974.

Development Control

ACPO Ernest Quill

This section is indeed fortunate in having Ernest Quill at its head, a man who knows the General Development Order by heart, and

2. (Following his last report on the subject, in which he argued strongly for the release of 65 frozen posts, the Committee responded by asking for more information. When this was provided, they resolved to reduce the establishment by 20 at the earliest opportunity)

whose attention to detail is renowned throughout the planning profession. The prime responsibility of his 62 staff is to look around for planning applications for the County Council to deal with.

Implementation

ACPO Barry Keene

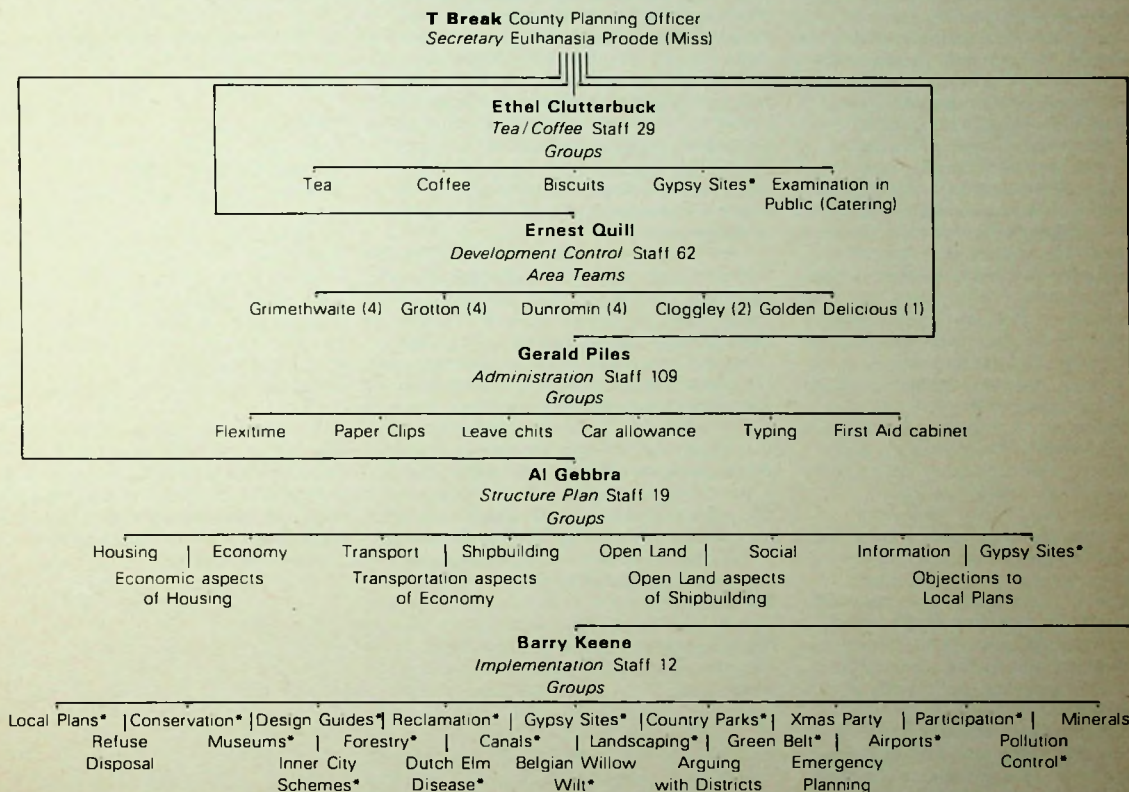
Barry Keene's responsibilities are wide-ranging. His 12 staff have to do all the things that the other sections are not equipped for (or forget about) including, for example, writing to the Districts about how they are getting on with their local plans.

Administration

ACPO Gerald Piles

In many ways the power-house of the whole Department. The 109 clerical and administrative assistants, led with uncompromising efficiency by ex-RSM Gerald Piles, ensure that professional staff follow the correct procedures for obtaining rubber bands, wellingtons and typists.

Fig. 15
The organisation of the County Planning Department



*Except where carried out by Districts

Tea and Coffee

ACPO Mrs Ethel Clutterbuck

Ethel Clutterbuck's role needs no further explanation. Her highly-trained team of 29 brewers and sloppers-out, though at times fully stretched, continually maintain a standard of excellence equalled only by British Rail.

The five Assistant County Planning Officers (there is no Deputy) thus have quite separate roles to play, and the potential problems of co-ordination speak for themselves. However, the Department organises itself in such a way as to ensure, as far as possible, that everyone knows what is going on, and why, and when it is likely to stop. As soon as the Management Team meetings have finished, T Break calls together his Assistant County Planning Officers for a briefing (although he is generally unable to attend himself more than 3 or 4 times each year as he rarely feels well after Management Team meetings. When this happens, the chair is taken by Mrs Clutterbuck). Briefly, these meetings of the Assistant County Planning Officers are followed by meetings of the Deputy Assistant County Planning Officers, who have weekly liaison meetings with the Principal Planning Officers and the Assistant Principal Planning Officers. They convene meetings of their Group Leaders, who in turn bring their Groups up to date. There is also a meeting every Friday afternoon for everybody who hasn't been to one of the other meetings.

No-one involved in the business of running a large planning department would pretend that frequent meetings of this kind automatically solve all the day-to-day problems which inevitably arise – especially in Grotton, where problems tend to arise more frequently than elsewhere. Indeed, the Grotton County Planning Department, like every good bureaucracy, often finds it necessary to have recourse to that old standby – 'the Internal Memorandum.' A study of this interesting field can often reveal more about how a Department is run than even the most searching O & M Study. For example.....

To: Mr Break

From: Barry Keene

Date: 18 July 1978

Subject: Regrading of Technician

I'm sorry to broach this touchy subject, when I know you have a lot of other problems. However, I would be grateful if you could give some consideration to a regrading for the technician in the Implementation Section, Dave Best.

Dave has been with us for a while now. You may recall interviewing him for the post in 1975, although you may not have had much contact with him since then. He has certainly worked hard at college to gain qualifications which he naturally hopes he will be of some benefit to him in his career. He now has degrees in Geography and Architecture, a Diploma in Town Planning, a Doctorate in some aspect of terrestrial ecology and an ONC Grade II in Statistics. He is also a Member of Parliament.

We've been a bit pushed lately what with the preparation of the Minerals Report you asked for, public participation on the interim shipbuilding policy and the Inner City business you wanted us to look into, along with the usual work programme, and I'm afraid I've been having to delegate a little more than I would have liked.

This has meant, among other things, that Dave has ended up doing one or two things that one wouldn't normally expect of a technician, such as meeting the Secretary of State recently about transportation investment in the County.

Do you think you could possibly see if anything could be done for him?
Barry Keene

PS Sorry about the ACPO's meetings recently – I just don't seem to have the time.

To: B Keene

From: T Break

Date: 4 October 1978

Subject: Regrading of Technician

Thank you for your recent memo about young Mike Best.

I'm very pleased that the young chap is getting on so well at college and I am so glad that he seems to want to stay with us. I often think how lucky we are to have such loyalty in the Department
T Break

PS Don't worry too much about the ACPO's meetings. I haven't been to one since March.

To: Mr Break

From: Barry Keene

Date: 5 October 1978

Subject: Regrading of Technician

Thank you for your memo concerning our technician, Dave Best.

In fact, he took up a post as Assistant Director of Technical Services at the GLC in September but I shall forward to him your kind comments concerning his success at college.
Barry Keene

This random example provides some insight into the sort of difficulties which the Department has to face. However, daunting though such problems as the re-grading of a technician obviously are, they must pale into insignificance when compared with more fundamental issues.....

The Structure Plan

In the far-flung corners of the British Isles, and indeed wherever English is spoken, as the sun sets and night draws in, and conversation turns, as it must, to public sector borrowing requirements and the activity rate assumptions in the tertiary sector, then it will not be long before someone, somewhere, mentions the Grotton County Structure Plan.

How has this plan achieved its present status as one of the most notable and far-seeing strategic planning documents ever seen in this country? No-one can say for certain. Indeed, even Mr Break, when invited to talk about it at a recent conference, was forced to decline, ostensibly on the grounds of pressure of work, but in reality (or so it is widely assumed) because he doesn't really understand it himself.

It may come as a surprise to some that strategic planning in the County began as early as 1971, when Mr Break was still working in blissful obscurity somewhere in the north of Scotland. The old Development Plans (the Town Maps of Grotton, Grimethwaite and Muckthorpe County Boroughs and the two County Maps covering the rest of the area) had long outlived their usefulness (even though the last of them was only approved in 1969), and the Planning Officers of the former local authorities got together under the chairmanship of the then Grotton City Planning Officer, Sir Hubert Buchan, who retired following his death in 1974. A considerable amount of survey work was undertaken during this pre-reorganisation period, much of it highly sophisticated and all of it totally useless. Unfortunately the majority of this material, which had it survived would have formed a unique historical record of the time, was burned during the 1974 Miners' Strike to keep Sir Hubert's office warm during the last days of his long and distinguished career.

Thus it was, that when Mr T Break was appointed County Planning Officer, he was faced with a blank sheet of paper. This, however, was nothing new to him and he was well aware from his long planning experience that the way out of this dilemma was to get someone else to fill it up. This solution was particularly relevant in Mr Break's case as he

had (by his own admission) no knowledge of, or interest in structure plans, and indeed this was (and remains) one of the main attributes of a successful County Planning Officer.

Mr Break was, however, aware that structure plans were very complicated and included numbers as well as maps. Therefore, from the very limited number of applicants who responded to the County's advertisement for a Structure Plan Chief, he chose Mr Al Gebbra BSc who had just returned to this country after a spell at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (and who, when he was only 5, had won a competition to find the person who could produce the longest equation, which had been organised by the Boys Own Paper). Thus equipped, and further assisted by a powerful team of statisticians, economists, sociologists, transport planners and micro-climatologists (none of whom were able to obtain posts elsewhere), the Department embarked on its great journey into the unknown, a journey which was to culminate in a sojourn in the strategic wilderness out of which they have only recently begun to emerge.....

City Planning Department
Town Hall
Grotton GR1 1AA



Grotton Corporation

City Planning Officer
Roland J. Pratt
MRTPI, P.I.C.E., MIMMR

Dear Sir,

3rd March 1975

Our ref. CPO/
Your ref.

re: "Structure plan"

I am somewhat concerned about your proposal to prepare a "Structure plan" for the new County area. I am aware that you are obliged to produce this plan, but in the case of my own Authority we appear to have managed for many years without such a Document and my Members are not convinced that its preparation is likely to be in the best interests of the Corporation. Perhaps you would consider whether it is really necessary to include the City in your plan.

I look forward to an early reply.

Yours faithfully,

Roland J. Pratt

Roland J. Pratt,
CITY PLANNING OFFICER.

Mr. T. Break,
"County Hall",
Grotton.

GMC

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

received - 5 MAR 1975

Mr. Pratt	
Mr. [unclear]	
Mr. [unclear]	
Mr. [unclear]	
For Action	
Mr. [unclear]	

Cloggley

Ted Break,
County Planning Officer,
County Hall,
GROTON.

From the Office of
Peter RABBIT MRTPI

GMC

Planning and Rents Section

c/o Back Pebbles Street
Grotton GR1 1AA

received 17 JUL 1974

Mr. [unclear]

date 16 July, 1974. your ref SP/clogg/TE/EP

Dear Ted,

I was really terribly pleased to see that you are going to prepare a structure plan, and I can't wait to see the results. I think this is just what the County needs, and while I know it will be jolly difficult for you, I am sure it will all be worthwhile in the end.

Jemima sends her regards.

Best wishes.

Peter

PETER RABBIT.

Grimethwaite Metropolitan Borough

Town Hall P.O. Box 22 Muckthorpe Near Gorton
Department of Estates (and Planning)
Ronald Blunt Dip Est Man Chief Officer

15 December 1974

date
our ref
your ref

Break, You can prepare a blasty Structure Plan if you like, but don't
think we'll take any blasty notice of it. Yours
slant

T. Break etc.
The County

GMC	
PLANNING DEPARTMENT	
received 22 DEC 1974	B.
Mr. Break	
Mr. Blunt	
Mr.	
Mr.	
For Action	
Mr.	

N Smoothe MA(Oxon) FRTP I AMBIM
Director

E Break Esq DipTF MRTPI
County Planning Officer
County Hall
Side Street West
GROTON

GMC	
PLANNING DEPARTMENT	
received 27 SEP 1974	B.
Mr. Break	
Mr. Blunt	
Mr.	
Mr.	
For Action	
Mr.	
Mr.	

Royal Metropolitan Borough
of Dunramin



Department of
Environmental Services

Civic Centre
Batterley GRS 54V

24.8.1974

Dear Break,

Local Government Act 1972, Section 183(1)

I was most interested to hear that you have the intention of preparing a Structure Plan for the County area. This is, of course, entirely in line with the legislation, and may I say therefore how much I accept this initiative.

I know you will be conscious of the necessity to consult with your District colleagues at every stage so as to make sure that all the various factors which we have in our minds can be taken into account. I am sure that a little time taken at this early stage will pay off in the long run, and may I respectfully suggest that before you actually start work you might get in touch with my Secretary and arrange a meeting. (I should add that I shall be away in Brussels on a Management Course until the end of September - perhaps we could meet after that?).

Yours etc. Get that off straight away Miss er, you're new here aren't you? How about a spot of dinner tonight? Good heavens you're not still writing all this down are you?

N Smoothe

Nigel Smoothe pp
(Dictated by Mr Smoothe and singed in his absence)

Initial announcement

The first stage in the long process was of course the initial public announcement that the County had finally accepted the inevitability of the need to produce a structure plan for its area. This appeared in the Grotton Advertiser and read as follows:

action
Benshill
(4.99, excel
c. off Underdon

ANS, unworn size
nct. male Hufman,
n at 14.99. Tel 544

speaker. (4.99. Tel

stick. (3 Telephone

starter motor and
1 excel cond. (4.99 the
17.982

steering rack and
ring wheel. (4.99 the
AP2

acher of the Deal
discont. (3.50) Tel

RHS all 1983 2
8th.
suit. 34 length
black. (4.99

gy. unscr.

Machine.

1. Lamin

Dunc

on

... with liquidizer, price (4.95. Tel
Haywood 69974 alt npm
RUBBER FOOT for Hoover Keymatic
brand new. L.V. Boy's black leather top
Shoes size 1, never worn. (3.99. Tel
247 5332

OIL FILTERS. Air ...
points, suit DAF Volvo etc. Renaults
from 12 onwards. (4.50. 487 3179
CURTAINS. 1 pair, modern design,
yellow black white, length 66in. width
52in. (4.99. Tel 739 4868

Under-a-fiver

ONE PAIR Pillar Taps (for sink unit),
very good cond. (3.50. Tel 268 4930

BLUE COSSETT CARPET. 2yds. 26in
x 2yds 16in. ex cond. (4.99. (333 1381)

ONE QUILT 73in x 103in. green and
white. (2. Tel 262 3371

PARCEL OF GIRLS JUMPERS good
cond. approx size 10/12. (4.99. Tel
343 6839

STAINLESS STEEL Double Drainer
Sink top 63 x 21. (4.99. Tel 487 8176

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black face, silver numbers from (3.50)
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930 7412

GROTON COUNTY COUNCIL PREPARATION OF STRUCTURE PLAN INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Grotton
Metropolitan County Council hereby
initially announces, that it intends to
produce a Structure Plan for the Grotton
Metropolitan County, under the
provisions of the Town and Country
Planning Act of 1971. If any person has
any good ideas as to items which might
be included in this Plan, these will be
very useful.

R. SLICKER
County Secretary

VARIOUS pieces of Pinknash Pottery
(4.99. 470 9263

CARMEN 11 Heated Rollers ...

MO.
chair...
Ave. off
Wyth

MOD CHAIR.
cond. 14 Und
Rd, Benshill

VERY TRENDY
K. 22in waist
cost £17, but
8585.

CAR RADIO v
Richdale 401

ROVER 2000 £
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MORRIS 130X
dynamo, both
pair. Tel 051-

MORRIS 130C
column and st
pair. Tel 051-

1971 to 1976
magazines, no
633 5836

JOURNALS (v
of 58. £3. Tr

LADIES gre
size 12 1/2
Tel 307

CONNEC
(2.50)

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The Report of Survey

As every planning student knows, a plan is not a plan unless it is preceded by a survey. While some of the information thus gleaned can frequently be of great assistance in the preparation of the final plan, the main purpose of a survey is to facilitate the production of a report upon it. Although there are no statutory requirements as to what it should contain, in practice most Local Authorities accept that to be worthy of the name, a true Report of Survey must be exhaustive, objective and, above all, very, very long. The conspicuous success of Grotton County Council in this area is now well known — indeed, for sheer comprehensiveness, its 8 volumes far exceed anything hitherto attempted:

Report No	Title	Pages
1	Housing and Population	560
2	Employment, Offices and Shopping	534
3	Transportation	812
4	Open Land, Recreation and Sport	208
5	Education (later withdrawn at the request of DoE — education not a Metro County function)	405
6	Real Ale	130
7	Social Aspects	12
8	Summary Report	2660

(Mr Break would like it to be more widely known that all these volumes are still on sale in County Hall at £4.50 each, or £1.25 for the complete set, and in fact the County Council would be rather pleased if some of them could be taken away since they are occupying the space originally set aside for the County Estates Department).

The Reports of Survey for the Grotton County Structure Plan generally followed traditional lines in that they brought together and amplified whatever information the County was able to cobble together in the time available.

This produced responses from only four people, namely the District Planning Officers of Grimethwaite, Grotton, Dunromin and Cloggeley. (No reply was received from Golden Delicious). These are reproduced on the previous page (The Chief Executive, Tony Monopoly, also wrote to T Break at this point and requested a meeting to discuss how the structure plan was going to be progressed corporately through the new interdepartmental liaison groups he was in the process of establishing. After a four-hour

session with Break (the memory of which is never likely to leave him), the Chief Executive wrote again saying he would be pleased to leave the matter with the Planning Department but that he would be grateful if he could receive copies of all the papers so that he could object at the appropriate stages).

Mr Break naturally handed all these various letters to Al Gebbra and went off to lunch in the Chief Officers Dining Room. They were not to meet again for four years.

Responses to Report of Survey

As required by statute, the public were informed about the Survey as soon as it was completed.¹ In addition, copies of the full report were given to the District Councils and to the press. Surprisingly, the serious professional publications contrived to ignore the event; 'The Planner', on the other hand (and only 9 months later) published a review by an enthusiastic academic from an obscure Polytechnic in the Home Counties. This may be worth quoting in part:

..... rubbish. For example, the statement on page 973 of the Summary that "the population of Grimethwaite in 1986 will rise to 95,473.7" betrays an over-dependence on statistical techniques. Surely Grimethwaite is likely to experience a declining population over the next 10 years? This fault again comes out in the comment on page 1391 that 'the house condition survey demonstrates conclusively that post-war houses are likely to be much newer than those built before 1900.' This is not adequately supported by factual information. Having said that, the conclusion on page 1870 that 'there is a prospect of rising male activity rates just above females throughout the 1980's' while comforting, will need to be monitored carefully. In general, I must say, I find the Grotton report turgid, irrelevant and extremely heavy, and in my view it should be

The District Planning Officers again came up with some interesting views

Dunromin

Dear Break,
Thank you for sending me a copy of your Reports of Survey. These are, of course, most impressive and clearly a great deal of work has gone into them, though perhaps this is to be expected in view of the fact that they have taken two years to emerge. I am bound to say that I have been a little disappointed by the lack of consultation with my Authority during the preparation of these reports, and this is reflected in the fact that I must regretfully attach some 15 pages of reservations in respect of various points you make which I feel do not adequately reflect Dunromin's perspective on strategic issues. I must particularly draw your attention to the failure to recognise the importance of Bletherley in the regional economy and I look forward to your rectifying this omission in future drafts. I was more than a little surprised to find no reference at all in the Report to some of Dunromin's more pressing problems, such as unemployment, which while admittedly only at 1.5% at the present time, shows every sign of rising sharply in the not too distant future. I am sure you will be able to take all my points into account as work proceeds (which will hopefully be more speedily than heretofore).

"It is my intention to raise the problem of the lack of consultation at one of our fortnightly liaison meetings, although I must point out that I shall be at a conference in Vancouver for the next few weeks and will miss the next two meetings. Yours very sincerely etc. Right Mavis did you ring Mrs Smoothe? No problems? Good, your place at half eight then.
Nigel Smoothe pp
Dictated by Mr Smoothe and sniged in his absence.

Grimethwaite

Break,
I see you have sent us your Reports of Survey. Kindly send a furniture van round to collect them as they are no use to us.
Blunt

Cloggley

Dear Ted,
Thank you for your good wishes. I am glad to say Jemima is up and about again now and we are hoping the plaster will come off next week. Many thanks also for the Reports of Survey. I haven't had the chance to read them, but I'm sure you will have covered everything. It must have been a lot of hard work for you.
Best wishes,
Peter.

Grotton

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your recently produced 'Structure Plan Reports of Survey' and must confess to being somewhat at a loss as to their purpose and value. Rather than going into detail about the many oversimplifications in the documents, or the factual inaccuracies they contain, I would merely reiterate my Authority's view that your exercise would be likely to proceed in a more satisfactory manner were the City to be omitted from its purview. In this respect, it would appear that your reply is still awaited to my last letter on the subject.
Yours faithfully,
Roland Pratt

(No reply was received from Golden Delicious).

¹ (by a postcard in the newsagents opposite the crematorium)

The Reports of Survey were also sent to the other Departments of the County Council to elicit their views. The Chief Executive (who was busy at the time reorganizing the County Treasurer's Department), indicated that he would defer comment at this stage; while the County Surveyor, who was asked to comment particularly on the transportation aspects and to indicate the intentions and priorities of his Department, replied that the intention of his Department was to build a lot of roads and his priority was to build them as quickly as possible, but he was 'not able to say quite where just yet.'

Alternative Strategies

Having studied, assimilated, coded for the computer, and lost the various responses to the Report of Survey, Al Gebbra commenced work on the next phase of the preparation of the Structure Plan. In the continued absence of advice from Mr Break, whose attitude to the Structure Plan had become daily more obscure, Gebbra produced for his team a memorandum of staggering intellectual competence on the generation and evaluation of alternative strategies¹

Internal Memo

From : Al Gebbra

To : All Structure Plan Group Leaders

Subject : Alternative Strategies: Proposed Methodology

File : 4

Following our meetings on the 3rd, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 17th, 18th, 21st and 22nd, I feel that our way forward is now clear but it may be helpful if I put down in writing one or two of the main points which arose from our discussions.

Firstly, of course, we are now agreed that, basically, we will be following the approach developed by Read et al in 1969. (For anyone who's still unsure about this, there's a copy in the library - Al Read : Temporary Disequilibrium in a Guinness Situation, published in Zeitschrift Fur Die Statistisches Dummkopfe Vol XXIV, page 3).

As you will all recall, Read's model in its simplified form goes like this:

$$A^1 = \left[\frac{(\Sigma DaZ \sqrt{\frac{B}{3} + 2k^n (Eip)^{10}} + \frac{\pi RT P^2}{\infty})}{(EiaD^{Eo})^{x-1}} \right] U_{ij} - W$$

(in our case, of course, Ai is Grimethwaite) Just to go over it once more, so that we all know where we're going: Read argued (characteristically) that the total amount of survey information flowing from zone j to zone k will possess a certain utility (Uij) in terms of its suitability for the preferred

strategy (Z) or the wastepaper basket (W). Developing this, he postulated a broadly elliptical relationship (x) between the two finite sets (Z and W) in order to calculate the size of the wastepaper basket required. This, of course, is a subset of the Cartesian product (Z plus W), so therefore x = ZW. If the pair (ZW) = X, then Z is x-related to W (I know Bill is unhappy about this but it should come out in the wash) and Read concluded in his later work (I don't think this is in the library) that the whole may be represented by an incidence matrix

$$Y = (Djk)$$

$$\text{when } (Xjk) = 1, \text{ if } (ZjWk-1) = X.$$

From this it naturally follows.

Since an indirect application of algebraic topology (assuming the survey information is in non-Euclidean space) to each of the vortices would produce an algorithmic response (Alison - no problems here, are there?) - I suggest instead that we develop a set of Fortran routines to adumbrate a dynamically-related co-efficient (binomially derived) which should give us a straightforward series of simplicial regression analogues. (We don't want to fall into the same trap that West Midlands did!)

By the way, you will notice a significant departure from what we agreed earlier, particularly in the area of (ji X)-1 + kH = 0 (assuming we can get this change through Committee) and this pre-supposes the need for a complete re-orientation of the primary²..... this of course remains a somewhat crude technique and more research is obviously needed, but unless anyone can come up with a more robust tool (Ted, any joy on this front?), we shall be using this approach in the preparation of our Alternative Strategies.

Al Gebbra

Fig 16

The County Surveyor's plans have been hard hit by the Government spending cuts



1 This historic memorandum has recently been bought for the nation and will be exhibited at the Museum of Town Planning Circulars, Memoranda and Advice Notes, soon to be opened at 2 Marsham Street, London SW1

2 Publisher's note - the next 33 pages of Gebbra's memo are a little difficult to follow and have therefore been omitted

While the Gebbra technique, or one of its many derivatives, is now a commonplace in planning departments throughout the country, it is easy to underestimate just what a revolutionary breakthrough it was. It involved, of course, nothing less than the identification of every possible alternative planning policy, the individual weighting of each of these policies in relation to a range of possible social, economic and physical objectives, and the ultimate selection by statistical methods of representative strategies for detailed consideration. It came as no surprise to anyone that initial studies revealed over 42,357 major variables which needed to be taken into account. As a result, analyses were regressed, co-efficients were multiply-correlated, 'Chi's' were squared and deviations were rooted out across the length and breadth of the County. The combination of the variables into strategies involved computer runs lasting several months at a time, leading to the gradual reduction of the number of strategies from figures with dozens of noughts on the end, to 3, (one of which, incidentally, relied upon the departure of the entire population of the County to the neighbouring shires; this strategy appeared to score very highly in that it eliminated the housing problem, reduced unemployment, and stopped vandalism at a stroke).

The whole enormous exercise, involving the weighting of the various policy combinations against 812 broad objectives, was carried out on a matrix occupying some 4 acres on the floor, walls and ceilings of a disused coke-store in the basement of County Hall, which subsequently became known as the weighting room.¹ It was in that room that Gebbra himself lived during the whole of the two years for which this stage of the process lasted, and so far as anybody knows he never left the building, except to visit NASA at Cape Canaveral (who had been brought in to handle the computer runs).

After what must have seemed like an eternity in that gloomy, smoke-filled dungeon, one day, shortly before Christmas 1977, Al Gebbra finally emerged, blinking into the light, bearing the enormous weight of the draft strategies on his shoulders, and triumphantly entered the Department to acknowledge the approbation of his admiring colleagues — who, since it was a Sunday, were all at home in bed. Undaunted, the exhausted Gebbra carefully set down his precious burden in front of the County Planning Officer's desk and, overcome with emotion, staggered out of the building and into the silent streets of the city. Little did he know at that climactic moment in time, that his life's work was completely incomprehensible and more than 2 years out of date.

The Draft Plan

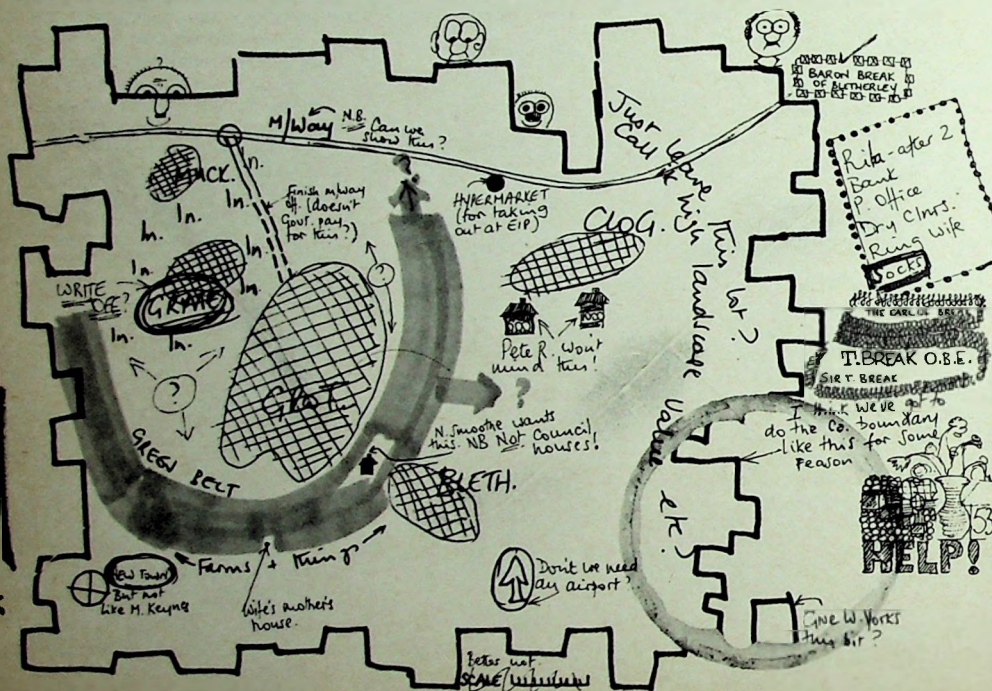
As soon as he arrived the following day, T Break realised that something was wrong and as he approached the huge pile of papers which barred the way to his chair, the awful truth dawned. He glanced at the top page, saw Gebbra's signature, and reached for the phone. By 11 o'clock that morning the unfortunate Gebbra found himself on a plane to Stuttgart, where a place had been reserved for him at a conference on structure planning in the Balkans. As soon as Gebbra was out of the way, T Break called in Mrs Clutterbuck and, working till well after 4 o'clock for nearly a week, they wrote the Draft Plan between them and by early the following week, had sent the complete document to the Department's Structure Plan Division for them to write the reasoned justification. Break had considered, but rejected, the idea of having alternative strategies for public consultation because of the obvious danger that, having been consulted, the public might then choose the wrong one. As it happens the plan he now produced was designed to have sufficient flexibility to thwart all possible objections to it, and it was with considerable pride that he subsequently referred to it as 'a minimum disturbance strategy'.

Fully aware of the statutory requirement for an unhelpful map to accompany the policies, Mr Break had sketched out the key diagram for the Structure Plan on the back of an envelope (see over page) and then passed it to his graphic design team to knock it into shape.

¹ This nomenclature is the only part of the Structure Planning process understood by T Break, who took it to be a reference to the length of time taken to complete the task

Fig. 17

The actual envelope on the back of which
T Break drew up the Structure Plan



Public participation

It was at this point that Mr Break was reminded of the necessity to consult the public about the Draft Plan. This was essential, of course, in order to be able to produce a statement saying that the public had been consulted. Not surprisingly, the County Planning Officer was worried about this: he recalled that public involvement in earlier stages had been limited to one enquiry from a Dr J McTavish of Bedside Manor, Slatlocks, who had read the postcard in the newsagents and had written asking for a sample bottle of 'Structure Plan' which he had assumed was a new patent preparation designed to restore lost vitality.

Even the sceptical T Break was forced to admit that a more comprehensive approach to public participation was going to be

necessary for the Draft Plan. But, apart from a few bearded lefties in the Structure Plan Section (whom he viewed with understandable suspicion), there was no-one in the Department who seemed to have any ideas about how the job should be tackled. Suddenly, the answer seemed clear – consultants! After some brief enquiries he was put in touch with a highly reputable firm of market researchers called Askham and Scarpa Ltd (whose experience in this field had been limited to the unsuccessful national launching of badger-flavoured crisps) and shortly afterwards their northern representative, a Miss Gloria Heatherdown, visited the Department to show her credentials. Some of her ideas for exciting the public's interest went a little too far for Mr Break, but when she described her role in an earlier exercise embracing half the adult population of West Bromwich, he had no hesitation in taking her on. In no time at all Break had agreed to go to his Committee with a scheme of public participation which for its complexity, its sophistication and (particularly) its staggering cost, went far beyond anything previously attempted in this country – or indeed thought feasible by anyone outside academic institutions.

Immediately after their appointment, Askham and Scarpa launched into their multimedia campaign with devastating thoroughness. Local newspapers were kept supplied with press releases four times a day; local radio and television coverage was intense; several hundred public meetings were arranged (and often held); talking litter-baskets were installed in shopping centres; school children were issued with commemorative Structure Plan mugs; and huge night-time firework displays were held which cleverly spelled out summaries of the main transportation policies.

The 'Grotton Advertiser' naturally played an essential part in the whole process, thanks particularly to the journalistic skills of Laurie Rootes, the paper's local government correspondent. After a six-hour briefing on the Draft Plan, during which each policy was carefully explained to him, Mr Rootes wrote the following day:

...next time he
make sure the stop-
cock was open.

The ... section main-
tained that this was a most
disturbing offence.
(Proceeding)

he set his
alation
her by the hair
armpit.

T. Break leaks Shock news! COUNTY'S MAXI BLUEPRINT HORROR

'and there's more to come'

say Weathermen

In a surprise move, it was announced from County Hall this afternoon that County Planner, T. Break had prepared a Structure Plan. This sensational news, exclusive to "The Advertiser", is bound to have major repercussions. Already the Chairman of the Finance Committee is said to have shot himself and Councillor Stanley Grimshaw said tonight "I'm afraid it's true, Laurie. I just hope your reader won't panic; but there is every likelihood that this could be the end of civilisation as we know it."

But perhaps the greatest breakthrough on the public participation front was the famous questionnaire and accompanying leaflet which was pushed through letterboxes throughout the County on a 100% sample basis. It was this, even more than the day-time strafing of the urban areas by formations of low-flying bombers dropping copies of the plan itself, which ensured that the Structure Plan became *the* topic of conversation in

launderettes and supermarkets the length and breadth of the County.

Much of the credit for this achievement must go to Chris Nowall, a young sociologist who had joined the County Planning Department by mistake. It was he who had insisted that the questionnaire be written in simple, everyday language – with the impressive result shown on the next page.

Bisho denies

Following yesterday's disclosures it was pointed out by the defence that was the first time he had appeared in Court for an act of offence. The Bishop he was not prone to try to young girls at the and he most certainly not attend choir practice Sundays wearing motif cassock.

"I deny that I she was at least 16 for a man of his age blue cheek

This Affects You!

The Grotton Structure Plan

Yes, even you have a part to play in shaping your County's future. It's *your* chance to tell us what you want! It's *your* opportunity to tell us how to get it! And so it will be *your* fault if it all goes wrong!

What is a Structure Plan anyway?

Well it's very complicated. But in simple language, it's a very big plan — well not really a *plan* so much, more a lot of words and phrases which we call *policies*. There is a plan as well as course — that is, not really a *plan*, so much as a kind of diagram.

How will it help?

It will help us build a better Grotton. It will safeguard our children's future. It will make life worth living again.

Will it affect my house?

Well, the thing is, it's very hard to tell. But even if we knew (and as it happens we have a pretty shrewd idea) we're not allowed to tell you in *this* plan. What you need is a *Local* Plan — and that's one for the Districts!

How much will it all cost?

Not as much as you might think.

Why has it all taken so long?

Look, to start with, some people have taken a *lot* longer than us and anyway you seem to have managed perfectly well without one all this time, so why all the fuss? As it happens, it's a jolly difficult job, planning a whole County, and it doesn't make it any easier when people keep criticising us.

What am I supposed to do about it?

It's *your* future and *your* Grotton. So it's *your* views we want. Fill in the simple questionnaire (form) and put it out with the milk bottles. It will be collected in a few days. Then sit back, relax, and leave the rest to us.

Grotton County Structure Plan - Your views

Your lucky No. is **2497**

Important notes for candidates:

You have 3 hours. It is in your own interest to attempt all questions.

Neatness and style will be taken into consideration. All rough work must be done on a separate sheet of paper.

1 Name and address if known

2 Age

☐ 1-5

☐ 5-60

☐ 60-65

☐ 65-150

☐ other

3 Sex

☐ a) in the garden

☐ b) at the theatre

☐ c) in bed

☐ d) under the car

☐ e) with friends

If b) how long does it usually take you to get there?

4 What will you miss most when we knock your house down?

5 In your leisure time do you prefer to be

☐ male

☐ female

☐ other

6 Given the choice, which of the following alternatives would you prefer?

☐ a) a lovely new park with a swimming pool and a floral clock

☐ b) a festering, horrid, smelly tip at the bottom of the garden

☐ c) miles of ugly, noisy, dangerous fume-ridden motorways, which we can't afford anyway to be quite honest

☐ d) nice, quiet pedestrian squares with open-air cafes and fountains and things, and perhaps the odd bus

If b) please give reasons

7 Do you think that planners are an honest, underpaid, hard-working bunch of people who are only trying to do their best in very difficult circumstances?

☐ yes

8 Are there any other useful observations which you feel would be able to assist the County in preparing this plan?

Next, use your skill and judgement to answer this simple question:

And now we want you to complete the following sentence in no more than 12 (that's twelve) of your own words:

Do you like the Structure Plan? ☐ yes ☐ no

'I like the Structure Plan because....



A £2 Co-op voucher will be given for every correct answer

Thankyou for your co-operation
Please not that owing to a printing error, the answer to Question 3 should be selected from the alternatives given at Question 5, and vice-versa.

This competition is not open to members of the Royal Town Planning Institute or their families and friends.

When it came to analysing the responses to this Survey, a technique was devised in the Planning Department which placed the emphasis on speed and accuracy. So rapid was the process, in fact, that the results were available before most of the questionnaires had been sent out.

The public response to the whole amazing participation exercise was enormous. Letters poured in. One in particular caught the County Planning Officer's eye.

Dear Mr Break

I note from the publication recently destroyed by my dog that you have now produced the Structure Plan. I would be most grateful for the opportunity of discussing this work with you personally, if you can spare the time.

Yours sincerely,

Al Gebbra

*Assistant County Planning Officer
(Structure Plans)*

In total, no less than seven letters were received, of which five commented in particular on the recent outbreak of low-flying Fokkers in the area. Four of these sought compensation for roof damage caused by precipitation of heavy volumes of paper and the fifth, from a Squadron Leader 'Binky' Sopwith (Ret'd), while generally approving of the overall tactics, was a bit worried about the lack of ground support after the first wave.

Responses to the Draft Plan

There was, again, an 80% response rate from the District Councils:

Dunromin

Dear Break,

I am pleased to see that you have, at last, produced your Draft Structure Plan and am sorry to be late in responding to it; this is because I have been in the Far East on a lecture tour and also because I naturally wished to accord the matter the detailed consideration it deserves.

I must say at the outset how disappointed I am that the views I have expressed to you in my earlier letters do not seem to have been fully taken into account in the plan. This lack of consultation is something to which I have had the occasion to refer in earlier correspondence and it is with great regret that I find myself obliged to attach a 46-page list of objections.

I appreciate that the resolution of the various matters of principle which concern us will require certain changes of emphasis to the document as drawn up. I have no doubt that it will be your early intention to accommodate my Council's deeply-felt views in this respect and that, in doing so, you will wish to take more fully into account the true status of Dunromin's role in the regional economy.

Yours very sincerely etc Right that's it for today Miss er - you must be poor Mavis's replacement. I'm sure you're going to like it here. How about a spot of dinner tonight.

Nigel Smoothe pp

Dictated by Mr Smoothe and singed in his abcess.

Grimethwaite

Break,

I don't know why you bothered sending your so-called Structure Plan to us - I haven't got time to read it.

We object.

R Blunt

Cloggley

Dear Ted,

How kind of you to let us have free copies of your Draft Structure Plan, and may I say what an attractively-produced and extremely useful document it is. You and your staff are to be congratulated on all the hard work you must have put into it. I was a little disappointed to find there seemed to be no mention of Cloggley in the Plan, but I am sure you have a good reason for this.

Jemima's trouble seems to have got worse, and she's been under the doctor again, but she seemed a bit chirpier this morning.

Best wishes

Peter

Grotton

Dear Sir,

I refer to your recent letter which enclosed a document entitled 'Draft Structure Plan'.

Having considered the matter carefully, my Council have asked me to say that they see no reason to depart from their earlier view that it would have been better for all concerned if your Plan had proceeded without any reference to the City being made. However, I do not wish to be negative in my observations and would suggest that a meeting is arranged between us, at which I will provide you with the full list of objections which I have in mind. At this stage, however, I must inform you that I am especially concerned at your failure to stress the primary role of Grotton City Centre (indeed the Report appears pre-occupied with references to places which few of us here have ever heard of) and in this respect I am particularly disappointed to see so much emphasis being placed on Dunromin. In addition, I shall wish to discuss with you, as a matter of urgency, the forecasts in your Plan which purport to show a fall in the City's population up to 1991. This is completely unacceptable to my Council.

In view of the disappointing content of the Plan, I see no alternative but to reserve the position of the Corporation.

Yours faithfully,

Roland Pratt

(The Chief Executive and the County Surveyor were also sent copies of the Draft Plan and referred Mr Break to their earlier memoranda, in which they had deferred their comments to a later stage in the process).

Although he succeeded in putting it off for as long as possible, T Break was unable to avoid consulting the Regional Controller of the DoE, Mr N Cumbrance, on the Draft Plan. It is quite impossible in these pages to do justice to Mr Cumbrance's extensive comments, but a few examples will give the flavour of the DoE's remarks:

Page 3 para 1.19

There ought to be a comma after 'drip' in the fourth line from the bottom.

Page 27 para 2.12

There is a typing error in the nineteenth line – it should read '.... trips in the open country-side for enjoyment', and not '.... strips'.

Page 42 para 3.8

This paragraph should have regard to Sections 8(1)(b) and (c) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1971.

Page 58 para 3.127

The first sentence should be in capital letters.

Page 96 ff

Policies which 'urge' or 'press' The Department of Transport to do various things are ill-advised.

Page 96 para 3.120

The use of the word 'action' in the sixth line of this policy could cause problems.

Maps 1-43

The representation of the County boundary on these maps is not acceptable as it involves a site-specificity not appropriate at the Structure Plan level.

In addition to these and many other substantive comments, Mr Cumbrance also had a considerable amount to say about the policies themselves, and in fact wide-ranging modifications had to be made to the Plan in order to satisfy him. Again, a few examples will suffice:

The County's policy on housing, as originally drafted, had read:

The County Council will ensure that an adequate number of houses of suitable size and type will be provided in all parts of the County.

This now reads:

Housing is a District matter. The County Council will however keep an eye on the Districts to see whether they are providing an adequate number of houses of suitable size and type in all parts of the County, and if they're not, the County Council will give the matter a lot of thought.

On open land the Plan said:

The County Council will not permit development in the open land between Sleightley and Upper Gumtry.

This now reads:

By and large, and depending on the circumstances, the County Council will have regard to the possible need to limit development between Sleightley and Upper Gumtry, and will only allow it if it's alright.

Not all the draft policies were this straightforward to deal with, however. On industry, for example, Mr Break had originally written:

The County Council will take action to assist industrial development.

N Cumbrance replied suggesting an improved wording:

The County Council will endeavour to take steps towards the consideration of encouraging the encouragement of industrial development, and will monitor the results of this activity.

Fully aware of the advantages of remaining on good terms with the DoE, Mr Break decided to put himself in their hands and re-submitted the amended industrial policy in accordance with their wishes. Much to his surprise, however, this was again rejected by Mr Cumbrance, this time on the grounds that it lacked precision, and that 'encouraging' and 'monitoring' were not land-use policies.

With commendable self-control, Mr Break gave the matter further thought and submitted a second redraft.

The County Council will endeavour to take steps towards the consideration of discouraging the discouragement of industrial development but will review this policy as the need arises.

While accepting that this was an improvement, N Cumbrance still felt the draft policy required further clarification and after another exchange of correspondence over a period of several months, the following wording was finally agreed:

The County Council will actively discourage the siting of dumps for the disposal of atomic waste greater than two miles in diameter in close proximity to residential development.

The Submitted Plan

After taking on board all of the comments from the DoE which he could understand (and all those from the Districts which were anatomically feasible) Mr Break got the plan printed up nicely with a glossy cover and, on what was one of the proudest days of his life, cycled down to London to submit it formally to the Secretary of State, accompanied by the Muckthorpe Colliery Band and the Spittle Morris Men. Not even his discovery the next day that the Plan could have been delivered to the DoE's Regional Office in Grotton (thus saving him a round trip of some 400 miles and a puncture) could have detracted from T Break's complete satisfaction at that glorious moment in his career.

The future

It is less than 18 months since that great day, and already the DoE have rushed the Grotton Structure Plan through to its supreme test – the Examination in Public.

Appropriately, the EIP will in fact be taking place in Grotton at the same time as this 'Planning in Crisis' Conference, and it could well prove a fascinating way for conference delegates to pass a few wet hours – not least because it is believed to be the first time ever that the Chief Executive, County Surveyor and County Treasurer of a County Council have formally lined up amongst the objectors to its Structure Plan.



Chapter 6

Transportation planning

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Romans, with their usual astuteness, made sure that they could get out of Grotton as quickly as possible by building roads, apparently at random, in every conceivable direction. Fig 18 indicates the likely position of the main legionary routes in the vicinity at about AD68. Some scholars are hopeful of discovering a further route to Bath, but others believe that, while plans for such a route were undoubtedly drawn up (indeed, it is likely that some property was actually acquired in advance), fierce public opposition to the scheme obliged Rome to abandon the project.

Few improvements to the road system were to be made for the next 1700 years, and this inevitably accelerated the general decline in the area between the departure of the Romans and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Conditions were unbelievably bad for the motorist. The young Mozart, shortly before his appointment as Staatskappelmeister at the Court of Grand Duke Ferdinand von Schnitzel-Nibelungen, passed through Grotton on a short concert tour in the Spring of 1762, and left us with some unforgettable impressions of his experiences. He wrote to his uncle on the second of April:

I know not in the whole range of language terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road (B6196 Bacup-Grotton). When the frail light of the sun is withdrawn from this accursed region we are at every moment stopped by our solicitous coachman lest we wander amongst briar and thorns, bogs or pits or, by coming unsuspected upon hidden precipices, meet with painful death upon the instant!

And it seems that Mozart's vivid account described a situation that was not untypical of the whole area at the time. Indeed, apart from a turnpike road built some 20 miles to the west, not one carriageway realignment or junction improvement was carried out between the end of the Roman occupation and the outbreak of the Crimean War. Clearly, something had to be done. As a result of mounting public pressure, the chairman of

Grotton Corporation Highways Committee (the flamboyant Major Rhodes) called a meeting in late 1960 of all the neighbouring authorities and, with a great deal of encouragement from the then Ministry of Transport, they all urgently began work on the Grotton Regional Highway Scheme. The resulting plan (see Fig 19) was a milestone in transportation planning in the region. While some of the assumptions which underlay the whole concept might now be questioned¹, there is little doubt that, had the scheme as a whole been implemented, it would have been £670,000,000² well spent. But, as is so often the case, new predictive techniques and the constantly improving information base clearly demanded a complete re-appraisal of the plan. So it was that during the next few years a bewildering procession of new strategies emerged, were tested, approved – and finally abandoned. 1970 saw the Grotton Land-Use/Transportation Study³, 1971 the ill-fated Grotton Orbital Ringway Report and the more successful Rail Rationalisation Plan (see fig 11); in 1975 separate reports appeared on bus routing, car parking, pedestrianisation – and a particularly massive study recommending the immediate construction of the Grotton External Relief Road (another name for the Orbital Ringway which had been finally abandoned the previous year).

There was thus an alarming degree of uncertainty throughout this period – an uncertainty seriously exacerbated by the periodic suggestion by the Department of the Environment that all the studies should assume the construction, by the early 1980's, of the Ipswich-Workshop-Clitheroe Motorway which (although the DoE confirmed it would never be their intention to build) would

1 (for example, that car ownership would rise to 3.15 per person by the year 2014)
 2 (at November 1961 prices)
 3 GLUTS will be remembered for the pioneering work which it contained on the evaluation of alternative modes of transport – ranging from underground monorails to a system of guided mini-cars powered by poultry-droppings. However, the report on the final plan inevitably concluded that, for the time being at least, continuing reliance would need to be placed on more traditional methods of getting about Grotton – which was perhaps just as well, since over 20,000 houses, 4500 factories, 9 golf courses and a zoo had been acquired in advance for urban motorways

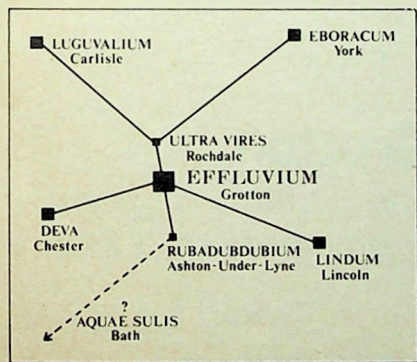
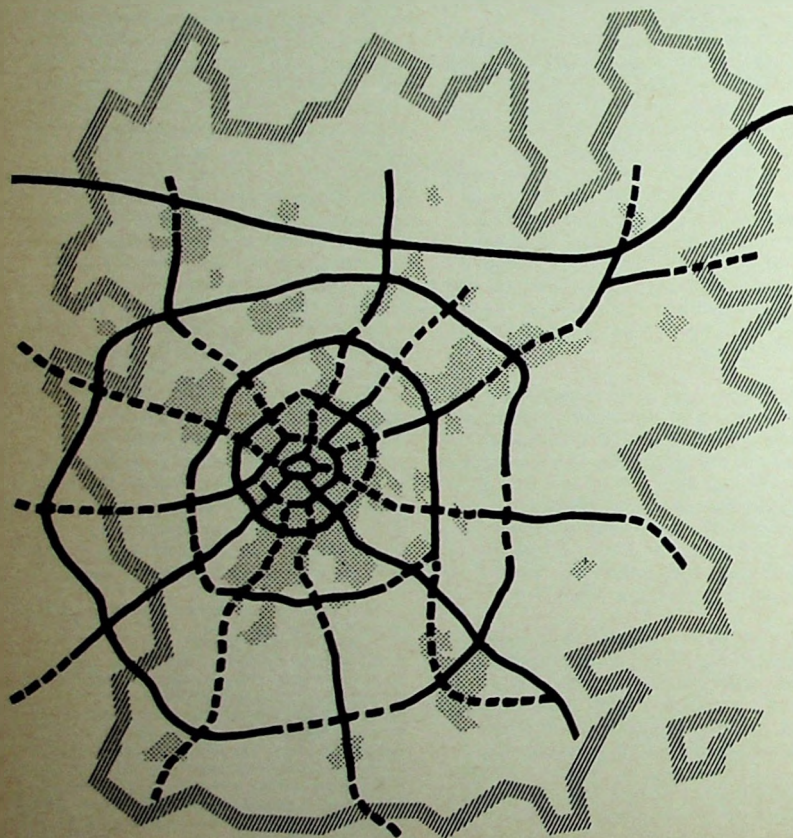
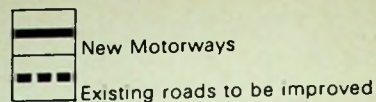


Fig. 18 Roman Roads around Grotton at about AD 68

Fig. 19



Grotton

*The Grotton Regional
Highway Plan, 1962*

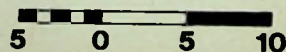
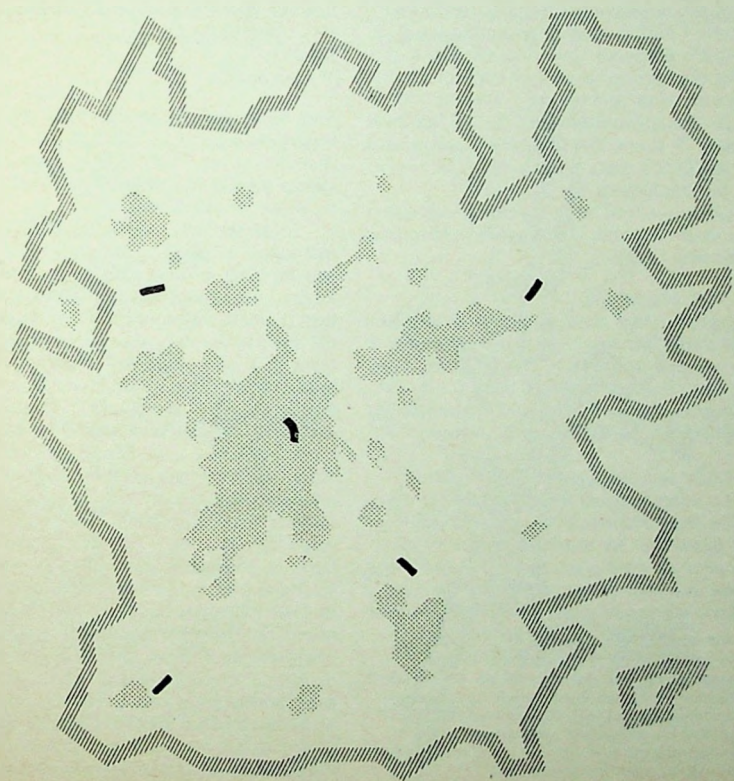
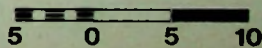


Fig. 20



Grotton

The 1979-80 road programme



nevertheless be likely to have a considerable impact on traffic flows in the eastern part of the County.

A new initiative was clearly needed. Partly because it had to be seen to be effective within a short period of coming to power, and partly because it had no money left after County Hall had been fitted out, the County took the historic step in January 1976 to defer taking any decision on the road programme for the time being.

Needless to say, the shock waves of the argument which followed reverberated throughout the area for months. Eventually, and after much consultation, all the Districts agreed that a concerted effort was needed to force the County into action. Burying their own considerable differences, the Planning Officers, Engineers and Chief Executives of Grotton, Dunromin, Grimethwaite and Cloggley all¹ signed the following letter to Tony Monopoly:

It is clearly the prime (if not the only) responsibility of the County Council to provide the Districts with the infrastructure they need at the earliest opportunity. In particular, greater resources must be devoted to the urgent improvement of the primary road network throughout the County area, and of course it is vitally important that this is achieved with due cognisance being taken of the likely increase in traffic by the end of the Century. At the same time, the District Councils would emphasise the need to keep plans for road building down to a minimum, in view of the over-riding responsibility of the County Council to minimise blight and the serious environmental damage which can result from major highway schemes in sensitive urban areas, and particularly in the open countryside. Furthermore, the County Council is urged to take immediate steps to increase the attractiveness of the public transport system (particularly the bus and rail network), and to secure the early

¹ Despite what one would have thought to have been the fairly contentious proposals for the Slatkotts Relief Road (see Figs 21-24), the views of Golden Delicious proved impossible to obtain.

provision of additional car parking facilities in the various town and city centres (linked to a phased scheme of road improvements and street closures, new bus stations and roundabout interchanges, bigger car parks, an increased level of accessibility by road to the national motorway network, further subsidies for lower bus fares, more parking spaces and above all, to ensure that this programme be firmly allied to a gradual reduction in (and eventual abolition of) the County Rate Precept.

A lesser man might have reacted to this letter with some concern. Not so Tony Monopoly. Calling upon the vast reserves of subterfuge with which his many years at the top of his professional tree had endowed him, the Chief Executive promptly wrote to the DoE's Regional Controller (Roads and Transportation), enclosing a copy of the Districts' letter and asking – among other things – for approximately £250,000,000 over the next 15 years. The Chief Executive added that the DoE's reply would also help him to sort out the County's annual TPP³ submission, which he appreciated was some three years overdue. The Department replied as follows:

*Dear Mr Monopoly,
I regret the long delay in replying to your letter about the financial basis upon which your various plans will rest, and may I say that I am indeed most grateful to you for raising so many difficult and embarrassing questions at this particularly awkward time.*

I can say there is no doubt – and I expect soon to be in receipt of confirmatory advice from Headquarters on this point – that funds will be made available to your Authority as time goes by. You will, I think, appreciate that details as to the amount, and any guidance as to how it may best be

² Since the Districts wrote this letter, the County Council has agreed to provide generous financial assistance to first-time buyers of railway season tickets.

³ Transport Policy and Programmes – a highly cost-effective system devised by the Department of the Environment for giving local authorities complete freedom to establish their priorities in any way approved by the Department of the Environment.

used, will be for the Government and the Local Authorities to decide at the appropriate time.

Perhaps I could take the opportunity of pointing out to you, however, that the advice contained in my last letter on the question of finance should now be disregarded, following the issue of Circular 1537/79. No doubt you will find it possible to reinstate the various schemes which you abandoned last month in response to that letter.

I need hardly say the Government will be looking to your Council to keep fully up to date with the necessary changes of emphasis which occur from time to time and I am sure that they will wish to co-operate to the fullest extent possible during this difficult period.

*Yours etc
N Cumbrance*

This reply was, of course, ideal for Mr Monopoly's purpose in dealing with the Districts, since it would encourage them to ignore the County's failings, and concentrate on those of the DoE.

To be fair, however, Mr Cumbrance is no more able to gaze far into the future than anyone else, and his uncertainties about the longer term were soon to be ameliorated by a firm commitment to the County in relation to the medium term (ie next year). This took the form of a grant amounting to £985,416.88 which, while marginally greater than nothing, fell far short of the County Council's aspirations as set out in their TPP submission.

Unabashed, and in view of the over-riding need to treat each of the Districts equitably, the County has so arranged matters that this finance will be split five ways; and for their £197,083.37 (with 3p left over) each District will, in the current financial year, benefit from the construction of 0.44 miles of new dual carriageway the provision of 9 new bus shelters and, interestingly, 3 small junction improvements of their choice (the major elements of this programme are shown in Fig 20). Allied to this, and in an attempt to reflect the Government's desire to get the most out of the existing infrastructure, Grotton's transport planners

Fig. 21
The design problem – the character of
Slattocks is threatened by heavy traffic on
the B6041



Fig. 22
Original proposal by former Slattocks UDC
(abandoned 1975)



Fig. 23
Scheme advocated by County Planning
Department and therefore rejected by
County Surveyor

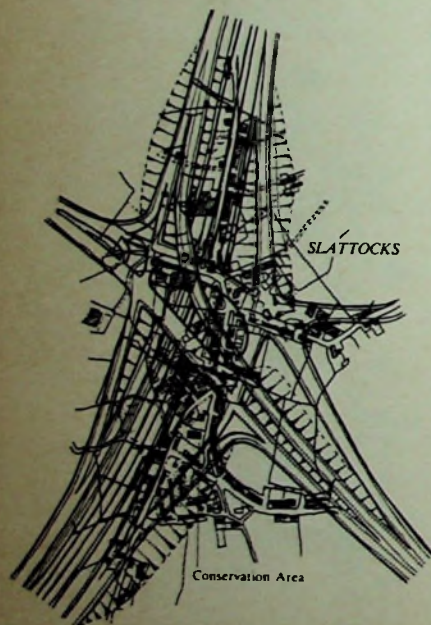


have devised a series of strikingly flexible schemes, the success or failure of which are being anxiously studied by planners, engineers and environmentalists all over the world. There is, for example, the Huddersfield Road bus priority scheme in Cloggley, which requires buses to mount the pavement at critical junctions; and there are revolutionary tidal flow arrangements now in operation on most radial roads leading out of Grotton, which involve motorists travelling in reverse gear only between 4.30 and 6.00 in the evening. There are even experimental traffic orders operating in certain pedestrian streets banning access to 'all traffic except that which finds it inconvenient to use an alternative route.' It may take even more than this impressive range of schemes to solve the County's transportation problems, given the ever-worsening energy crisis, the recent

explosion in the popularity of cycling and (following a detailed cost-benefit analysis) the impending consignment of the County Surveyor to the psychiatric ward of the Grotton Royal Infirmary¹.

Fig. 24

Compromise scheme proposed by the Government's Road Construction Unit



¹ (The County Surveyor never really recovered from a rush-hour pile-up in the centre of Grotton which resulted in his being cast away on a traffic island for three days with only eight gramophone records and the Bible or Shakespeare to keep him going)

At a time when statutory local planning in the rest of the country is coming in for a great deal of criticism, it is encouraging to note that, in this County at least, real progress is being made in this complex field. While, undoubtedly, there are different approaches to the problem, many of the Districts are getting on with the job with a grim determination, the like of which has not been seen in Britain since the dark days of the last war.

Naturally, there has to be some co-ordination of all this local activity and

attempts have to be made to ensure that the sum of the parts becomes a strategically coherent whole – the 'flesh', as it were, upon the County's Structure Plan. This, as students of the legislation will dimly remember, is achieved through the medium of something called the 'Development Plan Scheme', which exists to tell the public what is going on in the field of local planning, and is prepared by the County Council. The Grotton Scheme is a model of its kind and is reproduced here in full, as a guide to delegates during Conference week.

Grotton County Council Development Plan Scheme

Introduction by the County Planning Officer

The County Council is required under Section 10 (c) of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act (inserted by the 1972 Local Government Act) to prepare and keep under review a Development Plan Scheme, in consultation with the Districts. This is it.

Purpose of the Scheme

All enquiries as to the actual purpose of the scheme should be addressed to Mr N Cumbrance, Regional Controller, Department of the Environment, Dan Smith House, Grotton.

Method of preparation of Scheme

We wrote to all the Districts asking for information about what plans they were doing, then we stapled it all together and had it printed (see the Schedule). Some people may notice the great variation between the Districts; this reflects different levels of staff resources and competence, but since I'm always being told that local planning is mainly a District function, there's not much I can do about it.

Preparing the Plans

The public have to be consulted about all these plans at various stages (Mr Cumbrance will be able to tell you more about this). Most Local Authorities take far longer to prepare plans than they expect, so don't worry if nobody gets in touch with you for a while. Fortunately, the County has to be consulted at some stage or other (I forget quite when) so that should prevent anything really *awful* from getting through. If you require any further information, I should contact the nearest District Planning Office.

Best Wishes,
T Break

Schedule of Local Plans to be prepared 1978-1981

Cloggley

1 Spittle i' th' Bottom Action Area Plan

Spittle i' th' Bottom is a nasty little village with a population of 175. The plan is intended to draw together and update four non-statutory plans prepared since 1953.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

2 Mildred Avenue Conservation Area Local Plan

Everybody will have heard of the Mildred Avenue Conservation Area, and this is a Local Plan for it.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

3 Bogg Valley Recreation Subject Local Plan

Some people seem to think the Bogg Valley has enormous potential for recreation. A Local Plan is needed to improve its appearance, suggest ways in which conflicts can be resolved, and all that sort of thing.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

4 Mildred Avenue Redevelopment Proposals Local Plan

No information available.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

5 Cloggley Town Centre District Plan

Although Cloggley is a small town, it has great character, already seriously threatened by the expansion of the newsagents and the introduction of a Building Society into the main street. A Local Plan might help.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

6 47 Pontefract Road Action Area Plan

The nature of these proposals cannot be revealed at this stage, since to do so might cause blight.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed (but urgent).

7 Richard Hargreave Street Memorial Industrial Improvement Area

The Council has seen for itself the benefits which other places have managed to get from declaring industrial improvement areas, in terms of new jobs etc., but wishes to have one anyway.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed (but low priority).

8 Cloggley Moors District Plan

Most of Cloggley falls within this area, so it's pretty obvious there should be a plan for it.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

9 Upper Bogg Reservoir Action Area Plan

A plan to try to persuade the Water Authority to let people go near the reservoir.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

10 South-West Cloggley District Plan

A plan to safeguard the environment of south-west Cloggley, which is under threat of development, and to provide guidelines for refusing planning applications.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

11 Rest of the District District Plan

A Local Plan to deal with all the things not covered in 1-10 above and to keep the rest of the Councillors happy.

Date of commencement — not yet fixed.

Dunromin

1 Dunromin Metropolitan Borough Plan

The Borough Council intends that this plan (which covers the whole Borough) will be of assistance to the County by providing an input to the Structure Plan. It will study Dunromin's needs up to the year 2025, and it is hoped that it will be incorporated into the Structure Plan without amendment. The County will be consulted when the work has reached an appropriate stage.

Date of commencement — work began in 1976 and will shortly be complete.

Golden Delicious

No information available

Grimethwaite

Sod Off

Grotton (City)

1 City Centre Local Plan

The present plan, which envisaged large-scale shopping and office development and the demolition of much of the City Centre, was prepared in 1965. A detailed examination may suggest that circumstances have changed since 1965.

Date of commencement — 1974

Date of completion (est) — 1985

Grotton County Council

1 Green Belt (Subject) Local Plan

2 Minerals (Subject) Local Plan

3 Refuse Disposal (Subject) Local Plan

4 Coastal Conservation (Subject) Local Plan

These plans are obviously necessary to sort out the Green Belt, minerals, refuse disposal and coastal conservation, and to give the county staff something interesting to do. Work will commence as soon as the DoE can find some way of letting us get on with them without upsetting the Districts.

THE END

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Even a casual glance at this extraordinary document reveals significant differences of approach by District Councils to the vexed question of statutory local plans. How can it be, for example, that Cloggley (with a full-time professional staff, when they turn up, of only 9 plus 12 frozen posts) is proposing to 'fling itself into no less than eleven plans'¹, while the large and powerful Grimethwaite apparently intends to do none at all? There is no easy answer to this, but there is some evidence to suggest that one or two Districts are unhappy about the prospect of doing any local plans because of the excuse it gives the County (through the process of 'certifying' conformity with the Structure Plan), to poke its bloody nose in – to use the words of Grimethwaite's Planning Officer. This view has been more eloquently developed by

1 (Peter Rabbit once received a leaflet from The Town and Country Planning Association, advertising their Planning Aid service. After some hesitation, he finally decided that he could probably manage satisfactorily on his own)

Nigel Smoother, in a recent article²:

Let me say at the outset that I am a staunch defender of the statutory planning process, particularly in respect of local plans, which are so badly needed in many parts of the country. But it has to be said, insofar as my own Authority is concerned, that the extended timescale, the complex procedures and, above all, the required consultation with the County Council, effectively deny us the essential element of flexibility which is so critical if we are to meet the challenge of the Dunromin of the future. I am a great admirer of the County Councils and the vital work they do in refuse disposal and so forth, but with the best will in the world, they simply cannot be expected to appreciate the day-to-day planning problems faced by those of us who are out in the field.

2 Estates Gazump September 5 1978

Dunromin has therefore taken the view that, apart from something they call the Dunromin Metropolitan Borough Plan (about which very little information is available), they would prefer to manage without formally-prepared local plans for the time being. This is not the whole story, however, since there is known to be a whole number of 'informal' plans locked away in the bottom drawer of a large cabinet in Mr Smoother's office. This appears to be an essential element in Dunromin's general strategy on local plans since (by Mr Smoother's own admission in an unguarded moment) it enables the Borough Council to produce them without telling anyone and, just as important, to get rid of them again a few weeks later should the necessity arise. Anxious to avoid any criticism that this approach might be in conflict with modern concepts of open government, Mr Smoother goes on in the same article:

It would be misleading to suggest that John Citizen is being excluded from the plan-making process in Dunromin. But our way of doing things does enable us to avoid those time-consuming public inquiries and the other legal niceties so dear to the hearts of our friends in Whitehall. I do appreciate, of course, that one of the great and unavoidable drawbacks of this approach is that we are unable to take advantage of the enormous benefits which flow from the eventual approval of our plans by the County Council – but this is a situation which, in time, we shall learn to live with.

Cloggley, on the other hand, has no such qualms about the statutory process. Apart from those referred to in the Development Plan Scheme, a further 27 local plans have been worked on in one way or another since 1974, all of them in the fullest consultation with the public, statutory undertakers, amenity and civic associations, community

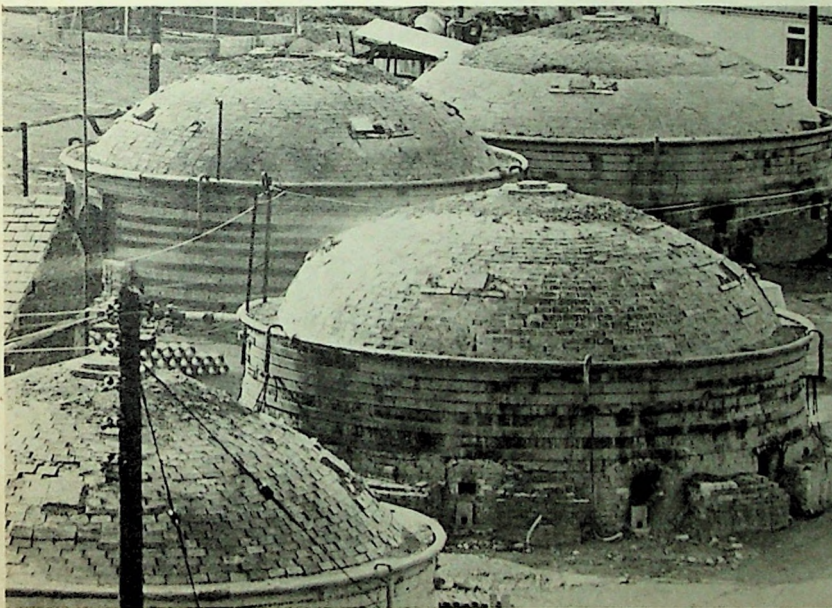


Fig. 25
Grimethwaite Borough Council is one of the few authorities to have included in a General Improvement Area an almost complete estate of Neolithic semi-detached bungalows.

groups, government departments, chambers of trade and commerce, schools and colleges, angling clubs and scout troops – and, of course, the County Council. In all, Cloggley has in mind the preparation of four local plans for each ward in the Borough – an impressive statistic and one which exemplifies the Department's sense of professionalism and dedication which is unusual, encouraging and hopelessly unrealistic.

Leaving aside Grimethwaite, which sees no point in local planning, and (of course) Golden Delicious, about which there is no information at all¹, mention must be made of Grotton City Council's view of the matter – which, not surprisingly, is different again. It might be said that the City approaches local planning with caution (and, on occasion, with more than a little suspicion). Roland Pratt fully accepts that plans have to be prepared openly, and with due regard to the County Council's interests as set out in the Structure Plan, but (to the outside world, at least) he appears reluctant to treat the matter with any degree of urgency. Work had started in May 1974 on a District Plan for the City Centre of Grotton, but all that had emerged in five years was a pamphlet entitled 'Towards a Report of Survey'. On the other hand, our researches indicate that the City Centre Local Plan has been the subject of over 50 meetings of the Chief Officers' Management Team and 19 separate reports to the Planning Committee, so clearly a considerable amount of effort is going into its preparation; and the Department (every member of which apparently considers it to be his number one priority) is currently gearing itself up to launching an internal discussion note on car parking by the end of 1980². (Interestingly enough, the City have recently approved a 2 million square foot shopping and office complex for the town centre, incorporating a new road/rail interchange, an international trade centre, 2 large department stores, a 3500 space car park, a multi-purpose sports

1 (The only plan thought necessary for Golden Delicious is one for the Core area)

2 (Mr Pratt naturally blames the complexity of the various statutory requirements for the slow rate of progress on this plan)

hall, two cinemas, an opera house, an olympic-sized swimming pool, an abattoir and an indoor pony-trekking centre, together of course, with some 'planning gain' in the form of 2 caretakers' flats and a public lavatory. In his brief report recommending approval of the scheme Mr Pratt said that, while it was too early to say what it might contain, he felt sure the local plan would be 'sufficiently flexible to take this development into account'.)

And what of the County Council itself? Why does the Development Plan Scheme have so little to say about the four local plans which are allocated to the County, and for which there is clearly such a pressing need? Part of the answer lies in the shortage of staff in the Department's Implementation Section³. But it is also fair to say that the Districts – with the exception of Cloggley – are convinced that the County Council have absolutely no part to play in the local planning process, and the Department of the Environment are quite adamant that they are not sure either. But the DoE seem determined to ensure wrangles over this issue do not hold up essential work. As N Cumbrance made absolutely clear in a recent letter to all 6 planning officers:

I am quite sure that, with good will and understanding on all sides, differences of emphasis such as this can be resolved perfectly satisfactorily at the local level.

These helpful observations naturally enabled Mr Break to view the problem in a totally different light.

3 T Break is aware of the Department's lack of expertise on the local plans side. He is shortly to appoint Mr Rupert Fletcher, whose last 5 years have been spent in South America, where he was responsible for the successful completion of the Amazon Valley Recreation Subject Local Plan, jointly prepared by Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. Mr Break hopes that Fletcher's experience in attempting to reconcile the conflicting claims of the various valley users – picnickers, horse riders, motorcyclists and head-hunters – will be most valuable in negotiations with the Districts and the DoE.

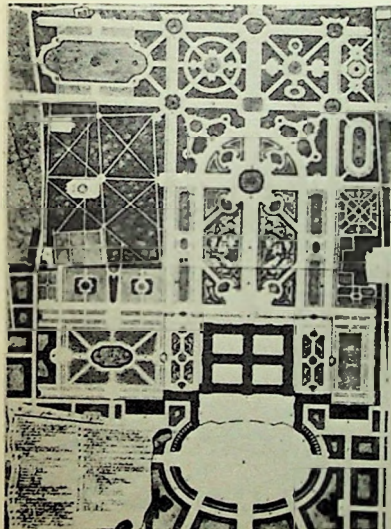
4 Mr Cumbrance was drawing heavily on the advice given by the DoE in their very popular Circular No 974/73 'How to Make Friends with other Local Authorities



Development Control

Fig. 26

Louis XIV's plan for Le Palais Grôton: there has been some delay with this application because the County Surveyor is still unhappy with the capacity of the junctions



Although it was clearly not the intention of the Department of the Environment, Grotton's planners believe they have actually found a way of implementing certain sections of the 1972 Local Government Act. This achievement must, in part, be due to the 80 or so urgent (and frequently acrimonious) meetings held by the Chief Officers concerned during 1974 and 1975, which after considerable effort – and compromise – on all sides, resulted in the agreement of a general principle for deciding which Authority should deal with planning applications – this being the most intractable problem posed by the new division of responsibilities between County and District. With commendable brevity, the six Chief Planning Officers finally agreed that:

Apart from those to be dealt with by the County, all planning applications shall be dealt with by the Districts.

T Break had argued for a slightly different approach (which met with a surprisingly unhelpful response from most of his District colleagues) – namely:

Apart from those to be dealt with by the Districts, all planning applications shall be dealt with by the County.

Although, some 5 years later, the agreed principle remains the basis of the development control arrangements in the County, it was soon found in practice that the vagueness of the agreement (while in many respects its great strength) was nevertheless making it difficult for County and District planners to understand their respective roles and, of course, for members of the public to know who they were dealing with. In response to this, the basic principle was expanded significantly in 1976, to read:

No-one is saying that the County shouldn't get involved in the odd planning application here and there, if it asks nicely, but generally speaking the Districts will be dealing with them, especially if they're going to refuse them. Having said that, if there's any doubt, it's probably best for the

people concerned to have a chat about it, just to avoid any nastiness (but not in Grimethwaite thank you very much)!

On hearing of this agreement, the Chief Legal Officers of the six authorities naturally felt it necessary to examine the wording and they held a conference to discuss the matter. It now reads:

And be it enacted that it shall fall to the County (which hereinafter shall be deemed to be referred to as 'the county') provided always that nothing whatsoever herein enacted shall be construed as containing any matter or thing not herein enacted or not and in like manner it shall fall to the District (hereinafter referred to as 'the District') that in respect of any application for development being an application for development as defined in Part III of Section V of the Principal Act ('Applications for Development') then the manner in which any such application shall fall to be determined shall be first agreed or otherwise as the case may be by consultation between the said District and the said County acting either severally or jointly as the case may again be preferably on the 'phone (but not in Grimethwaite thank you very much).

This essentially ad hoc approach has naturally led to various differences between the Districts in the degree to which the County manages to get involved and these are reflected in the table reproduced over page. (The complete lack of information from Golden Delicious makes comparison difficult, though there is no evidence to suggest that they have made any decisions since 1974). T Break naturally feels that these figures amply refute any suggestion that the County's relevance in development control is so small as to be capable of dismissal. As he said at a recent seminar organised by the local branch of the RTPi:

.....stands to reason, I think. As you can see, the total number of planning

1 This last bit was added by Ron Blunt

applications dealt with by the County rose by getting on for 10 per cent from 108 to 117, and this illustrates the increasing importance of the County in development control. In fact, at this rate, by the end of the century I calculate that we shall be dealing with a very large number indeed. You must also bear in mind that in over half the Districts the number of applications we determined rose or stayed the same. Though there is a continuing problem with our friends in Grimethwaite (who find themselves unable to send copies of any applications to us), this is overall a significant achievement and the figures demonstrate most forcibly the continuing need for a strong and viable Authority at the strategic level.

Nigel Smoother, addressing the same conference, viewed the figures in rather a different light. His paper on the matter included the following observations:

...of which there can surely be little doubt. As you can see, the proportion of planning applications dealt with by the Grotton County Council slumped dramatically from 2.05% to 2.01%, and this illustrates the diminishing importance of the County in development control. In fact, at this rate, by the end of the century I calculate that they will be dealing with hardly any applications at all. You must also bear in mind that in over half the Districts the number of applications they determined fell or stayed the same, and in Grimethwaite they dealt with no applications at all!

Overall the figures clearly demonstrate that District Councils are increasingly capable of dealing with this particular branch of planning activity unaided.

From the chair Roland Pratt summed up by saying: Clearly the County does have a role in this important field of development control – I'm thinking here of applications for the larger nuclear power stations and the like – but I think the feeling of the meeting is that Districts can generally manage on their own.

(Delegates will be interested to know that Dr Ross Biefburger of the Institute of Local Government Studies will be presenting his own analysis of these figures to the conference: it is understood that his major recommendation will be for further research to be undertaken)

Whatever the rights and wrongs in the continuing argument over who does what¹ the achievement of the authorities in dealing with nearly 6000 applications in 1978 is impressive. On the other hand, it has to be borne in mind that over 14,000 applications were submitted that year, of which 1219 are presently the subject of appeals against non-determination, 2071 are awaiting registration, about 1000 have been lost, and 981 are the subject of argument as to which authority should deal with them. (The remaining 3227 undecided applications are, of course, awaiting the comments of the County

Surveyor). On the bright side, however, several applicants have died since submitting their applications and this will have reduced the backlog to some extent.

¹ (which may or may not be complicated further as a result of certain proposals for 'organic change' which are under consideration as the conference approaches)

Who decides Planning Applications?

	1977			1978		
	County	District	% County	County	District	% County
Dunromin	12	874		10	1022	
Grotton (City)	9	2172		4	2249	
Cloggley	81	794		96	891	
Golden Delicious	6	no info		7	no info	
Grimethwaite	nil	1312		nil	1541	
Total	108	5152	2.05	117	5703	2.01



Conservation and Design

The Splendour That Was Grotton

Although Louis XIV's great plan for Le Palais Grôton never got off the drawing board (see Fig 26) the area around Grotton has been a source of inspiration for architects throughout history. Though much has now been lost for ever (many of the buildings erected in the period between the end of the Stone Age and the Industrial Revolution having been affected by slum clearance) some irreplaceable gems remain. A full appreciation of the glories of the area around Grotton can be obtained only after a lifetime's study and of course, apart from a number of academics, few people have got that long to spare. We can be grateful therefore, that so many distinguished writers have, over the years, set down their attempts to capture the essence of this unique place:

Ebenezer Howard*

(referring, in 1919 to Mumford Garden Village, Bletherley):

'The construction of such a magnet as Mumford is the symbol of God's love and care for man and all his fellow creatures. Here are seen a multitude of charitable and philanthropic institutions, healthful non-statutory allotments, cow pastures and beautiful well-watered gardens to encourage the promotion of elevating pursuits. Here an Art Gallery, there a bubbling rivulet, and every other shop a branch of Interflora.'

Nikolaus Pevsner*

(1958, on Grimethwaite):

'To N. of the Town a Gothic TOWER by Suggit, now vandalised. Undistinguished CONGL. CHURCH adjoining handsome Art Nouveau CO-OP. with pretty quined mouchettes and quartrefoiled triglyphs.'

Fig 27 Renaissance pragmatism:
Sir Christopher Wren's magnificent
Guildhall.....

*Attrib



Sir John Betjeman* (1962):

- 1 Visions of Cloggley in the mists of my youth.
Daisy's fine rump as we roamed the hills (strewth!).
That blossom-time picnic we mislaid Great Aunt Mabel
(A moment before she'd been sat at the table!)
- 2 My springtimes in Cloggley (mutatis mutandis)
Cricklewood, Lewisham, slow train to Brent.
Cream buns and doughnuts laid out on the balcony;
Nobody told me that Nanny was bent.
- 3 O Cloggley, dear Cloggley
(Edwardian reverie),
Splendid, incongruous, awesome and drab.
The bike by the tripe shop, the tram at its terminus
And Rosemary's bloomers rolled up in my hat.

Sir Kenneth Clark* (1969):

'As one stands here, transfixed by the majesty of the scene, who can doubt that something rather wonderful must have occurred on this spot sometime between 1300 and 1923. What élan, what panache, etc. etc...'

Les Dawson* (1977):

'The unfathomable richness of Grotton's spatial progression; the elegant symmetry and (it must be said) occasional capriciousness of form, counterbalance precisely the erotic sinuosity of the predominant physiographic modulators, producing a throbbing primeval dynamism, rhythmic and austere, a contrapuntal articulation of voids, and that rare and precious sense of *knackwurst*, which is so reminiscent of New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro and, to a lesser extent, Bridlington.'

Fig 28

..... with its stately and dignified interior

Thanks to the international interest aroused by similar eulogies, Grotton folk have themselves finally come to appreciate just what they are privileged to possess. Even members of the various Councils now accept that old buildings are not necessarily synonymous with wasted assets. Indeed, commenting in a recent interview with the Grotton Advertiser on a controversial application for development by the Max Proffit Property Corporation, Councillor Stanley Grimshaw, the Leader of the County Council, said, 'Don't worry about Grotton Hall. No get-rich-quick property developer's going to knock down what is probably the finest building I own, leastways not for the miserable amount they're offering at the moment. Er, sorry, that part slipped out. Don't print that last bit, Arnold'.

Though the meagre illustrations to be found on these pages can do them scant justice, who can fail to appreciate the lavish detail of Wren's masterpiece: the brooding self-confidence of the Spanish El Sub-sta; the collective sense of *Angst* surrounding Walter Gropius' little post-Bauhaus divertimento? So much to be proud of, so much to cherish.



*Attrib

1. From 'The Glories of Grotton - A Guide to the Most Agreeable Town in Western Europe. 727pp., profus. illus., immens. boring.

GROPE

The redoubtable watch-dog for this staggering historic legacy is GROPE, the Grotton Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Environment, which was formed in 1969 in order to fight the proposed Grotton airport, the open prison, gypsy caravan sites, pornography on television, council housing and the introduction of decimal currency.

(Miss Daphne Pike, the Organisation's energetic founder, will be remembered for her dramatic action in 1971 when she spent 18 weeks perched up a tree which lay in the path of the proposed Grotton Orbital Ringway (A6265(M)). Sadly mourned, Miss Pike died late the following year from a particularly virulent form of Dutch Elm Disease).

GROPE sees a continuing need for vigilance while Grotton's precious heritage remains under threat from insensitive development, and they have made it clear to the local authorities that they are fundamentally opposed to the impending changes. Anne Teak, a local spot-welder and the present Chairman of GROPE, puts it this way: 'We are fundamentally opposed to the impending changes'.

Over recent years GROPE has proved increasingly successful as a pressure group. One of its finest achievements came in 1978 when, after considerable effort, it finally persuaded the Department of the Environment to list No 19 Ullham Street, Muckthorpe, as a building of special architectural interest. The Secretary of State agreed with GROPE that No 19 was one of only 80 examples of a two-storey brick weaver's cottage, possessing the characteristic vernacular feature of front and back door in the same elevation, still surviving in this part of Grimethwaite.

More generally, it is reasonable to suppose that GROPE's tireless efforts influenced the County Council in their production of a guide intended to encourage builders and architects to design new developments of a character and quality which will respect and enhance the best features of the area's rich architectural heritage

Fig 29 Iberian autocracy – the imposing El Sub- sta

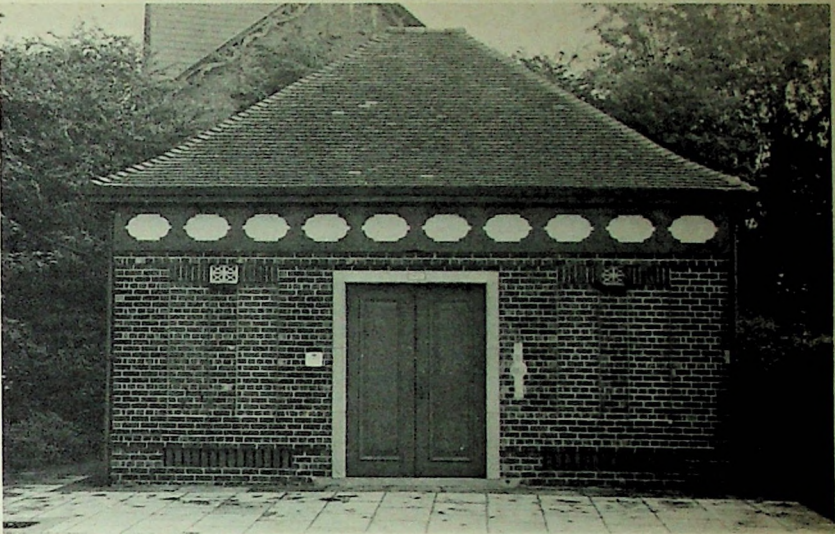


Fig 30 Endemic eclecticism – Walter Gropius's only hardware store outside Germany



The Grotton Design Guide

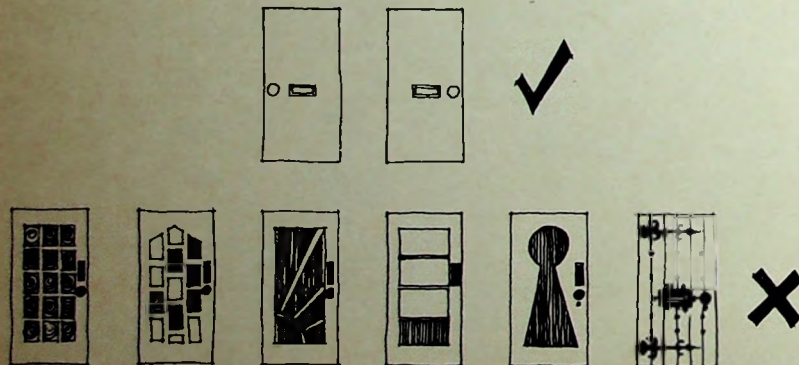
The great popularity of the design guides published by Essex and Rutland (now sadly out of date) encouraged Grotton County Council to produce their own as quickly as possible. Handsomely produced on cleverly-recycled Structure Plan Reports of Survey, the Grotton guide is rapidly, and deservedly, becoming a classic of its kind.

It deals with an impressive range of subjects from handy hints for anyone designing an airport runway extension, down to a provocative chapter entitled 'Do's and Don'ts for Decent Doors' (see Fig 31). There will, of course, be those who will say that Grotton is one of the last places in Britain that one would think of as needing a design guide, the current standards of design throughout the County being generally high. (It was after all only in 1978 that one of Grotton City Council's new housing schemes, put forward in a competition to decide the most distinguished building development of the 20th century, was placed a close second to the Berlin Wall).

Any attempt to precis this 2000 page pamphlet would clearly be doomed to failure, so a few selections chosen more or less at random will have to suffice.

Chapter 18, for example, deals (rather too directly for some tastes) with the vexed

Fig 31 Do's and Don'ts for decent doors (from the Grotton Design Guide)



question of *garden gnomes*. Admirably comprehensive though many other design guides are, it comes as something of a surprise to learn that Grotton's is the only one which really comes to grips with this difficult and emotive subject. Gnomes (and the Grotton planners have shrewdly drawn their definition widely enough to encompass pixies, elves etc) have become increasingly popular in the County, but the boom period of the sixties resulted in a rash of speculative gnomes, generally badly designed and poorly constructed, and some action was obviously needed. 'Careful consideration of the relevant design constraints' says the Grotton guide pointedly, 'will help in the production of a harmonious and spatially balanced resolution of the competing elements, and the ultimate reconciliation of form and function.' This, of course, is only a general rule-of-thumb and the following specific guidelines are put forward.

Height

Maximum gnome height will normally be nine feet, and it should only be necessary to exceed this in very special circumstances. As far as possible, the gnome should not be the dominant feature in the landscape – in many ways the impact can be greater if it remains subordinate to the surrounding buildings. It would normally be inappropriate for the girth to exceed twice the height.

Materials

Concrete gnomes weather badly and should be avoided. The toadstool should be of a design which is in sympathy with the shape and markings of local species. (Toadstools indigenous to Grotton do not have spots).

Facial expression

A successful scheme will reflect the character of the locality. Restraint is essential in conservation areas, where a sober and dignified demeanour will minimise visual dislocation. Parts of the county will, however, benefit from the careful positioning of gnomes of a more jocular disposition.

The toadstool envelope

As a minimum requirement, toadstools should be designed to Parker-Morris' standards, as set out in the Report 'Gnomes for Today and Tomorrow'.

Perhaps even more important than the question of gnomes is that of acceptable design principles for housing developments, and throughout the Guide, Grotton's planners have stressed the need for designers to look carefully at the particular characteristics of the site to be developed. 'Any site is bound to have its advantages and disadvantages – in Grotton's case, of course, the latter tend to predominate. This is not to say that in these areas the *genius loci*¹ is any less important – although it is always tempting to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. If it has a fault, the Guide contains some advice which, though well-meant, could impose undue burdens on designers working to a deadline – for example:

Architects and contractors should recognise that buildings on sloping sites have a tendency to fall over unless special care is taken; and it is generally preferable to carry out surveys on site conditions before building work commences.

¹ 'a sense of place' – see Essex Design Guide

The Guide naturally emphasises the importance of conservation. Pages 912 to 1214, for example, touch on that thorny old evergreen, barn conversions in the Green Belt, and contain some sound advice on how old barns can be successfully and sensitively converted into new barns or, should the necessity arise, crumbling heaps of rubble.

At no stage, however, is it suggested that the way to the Planning Committee's heart lies through slavish conformity with vernacular styles. On the contrary, the recent exciting development of neo-Norman maisonettes at Edna Street, Muckthorpe, is highlighted as an example of the planning authorities' willingness to encourage experimentation with new forms. Indeed, the writers of the design guide have been quick

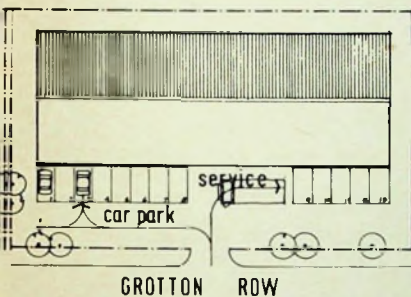
to identify the obvious limitations in the plan-form of some traditional homes. It points out, for example, that the division of the dwelling into a number of rooms, while having certain functional advantages, usually increases costs and reduces the all-important element of flexibility. From original research done in the County Planning Department, it now seems clear that the larger rooms become, the more space they contain. The Guide urges designers to take full advantage of this principle by making some rooms bigger than others.

Finally, ever-conscious of the continuing debate on 'permitted development' under the General Development Order, Grotton's planners have carefully analysed the problem of residential extensions and conclude that in most cases, satisfactory design is best achieved by building the extension at the

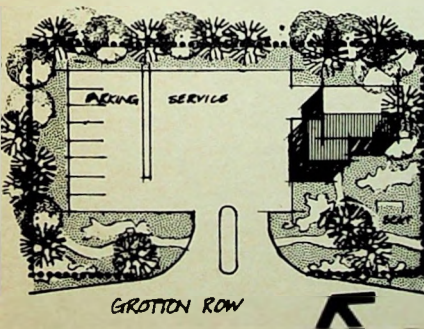
Fig 32

Grotton's architectural heritage demands a high standard for industrial estate layouts

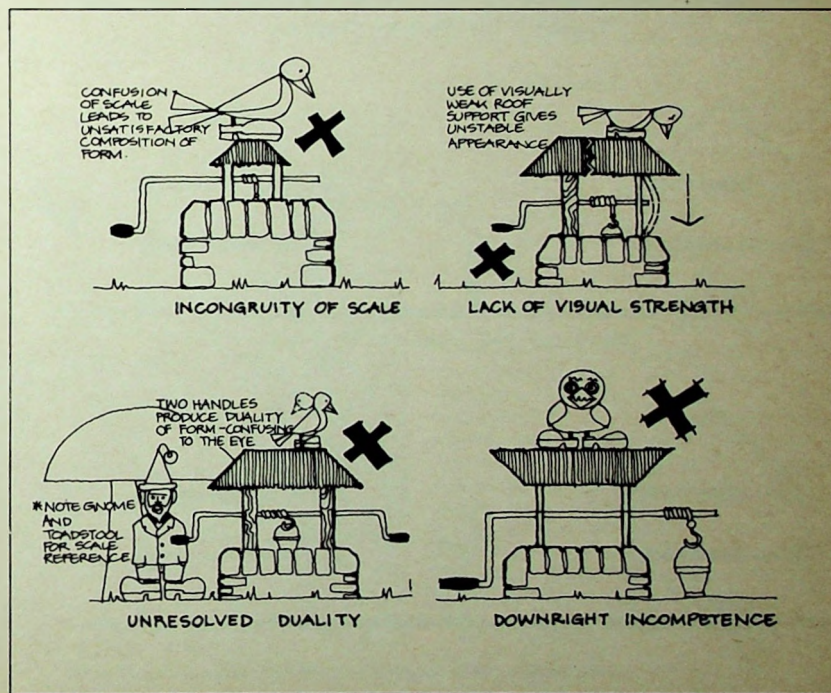
(The Scheme as submitted)

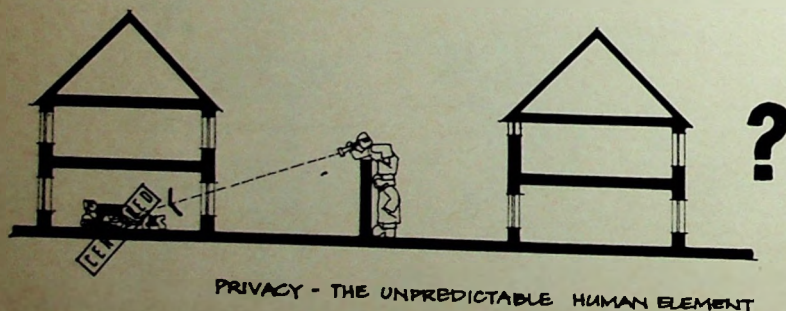
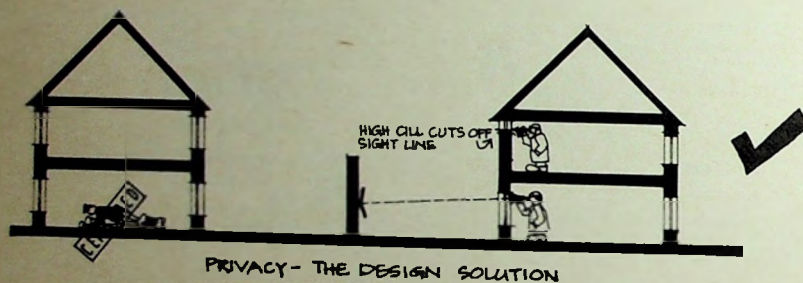
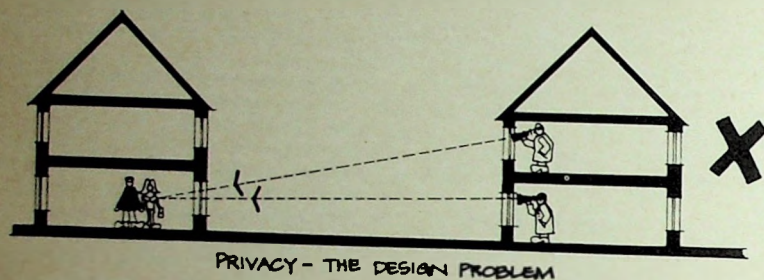


(The Planners' advisory layout)



Garden furniture – the Grotton approach





same time as the original house'.

The Grotton Design Guide is clearly essential reading for every architect and developer in the County, and should be of equal interest to the average man in the communal pedestrian circulatory interspace. It is, in fact, a powerful reminder of just how helpful a Planning Department can be if it isn't very careful. Perhaps its importance is best summed up by T Break himself, with this extract from the introduction to the Guide:

I must stress that this is only a guide. It's not for us to tell you architects how to do your job, and if you want to go ahead and ignore the whole thing, well that's fine, but I should warn you, if you do decide that that's what you'd rather do, I may be unable to restrain my Planning Committee from adopting the kind of unhelpful attitude for which they are renowned throughout the County. So it's entirely up to you.

Fig 34

The Design Guide's advice for a familiar design problem

The Rural Areas

*'Cloggley's heather-planted hills
Makes nice change from t' mucky mills'
(Anon c1951)*

Though Grotton is a Metropolitan County, it nevertheless has a wide range of countryside problems to deal with. Indeed, these have seemed more acute since 1968, when the advent of the Countryside Commission (which does its best to spend considerable sums of money in the countryside) suddenly caused many Authorities to redefine as countryside what they had always regarded as simply bits of land with cows on.

The Urban Fringe

Like all true cities, Grotton is completely surrounded by Urban Fringe.

As planners are beginning to find ideas for new problems within the urban and rural areas harder to come by, they have naturally turned to the land between the two for inspiration. And here they have unearthed a whole range of planning issues waiting patiently to be identified. The first thing they

Fig 35 The severe drought of 1976 dealt a heavy blow to the rural economy



discovered is that the urban fringe fulfills many important functions. It is an area of intensive agricultural production¹; it acts as a lung (green in parts); it offers an ideal home for traditional rural land-uses, such as sewage works, rubbish tips and power stations; and, critically, it provides a good deal of employment for Local Authority planners and DoE Inspectors in terms of appeals on White Land, etc.

Reference has already been made to the County Council's desire to prepare a Local Plan for the Green Belt and the opposition which this has attracted from the Districts. The fact that the County wished to extend the scope of this plan to include comprehensive proposals for housing and industry has clearly added fuel to this discontent, but on the other hand there is considerable pressure to make progress: as Councillor Stanley Grimshaw has said, 'places which have got Green Belts, like Bath, are nicer to live in than places which haven't, like Hackney.'

The Upland areas

The broad windswept acres (hectares) in the north and east of the County, once the backcloth to the Industrial Revolution, are now the battleground between a proud but diminishing local populace, and the hordes of Grottonians who pour out from the urban areas in search of adventure, freedom, and a bit of the other, in nature's warm embrace.

The problems of depopulation have become particularly acute in upland Cloggley (as over the years it has required fewer and fewer people to handle a sheep) and, as in many parts of the country, the young have departed – in this case abandoning the farms and villages for the bright lights of Grotton – leaving behind a population imbalanced by age and sex. The local authorities are agreed that a comprehensive programme of action is needed to stem this outward drift and they intend to revitalise the rural communities by encouraging new sources of employment and protecting essential services such as buses, schools and Chinese takeaways.

¹ Delegates booking on Tour 8 will have the opportunity of seeing some of the environmental problems caused by mechanised farming methods, such as those at the Von Thunen Piggeries near Grimethwaite.

Clearly, however, over such a wide area, this policy can only be successfully pursued on a selective basis and the aim is to concentrate investment in certain key villages in order to make the most effective use of the available resources. This has led to a strategic hierarchy of rural settlements – those receiving most development impetus being known as Category A villages while, at the other end of the range, those in Category D tend to have the water cut off.¹

The implementation of this policy has not been without its problems, however. In particular, it was found that the widespread use of the term 'Category D village' led inexplicably to invasions of broadcasters from local television news programmes, and Guardian reporters, all demanding street interviews. (This was deftly handled by the County Council, who promptly re-named them all 'Category C2 communities'). In addition, but at the other extreme, residents of Category A villages quickly became incensed by the arrival of Christmas cracker novelty manufacturers by the village green, and by the hazards to their children and disturbance to sheep caused by rural buses running at seven-minute intervals throughout the night.

Recreation

The rich and varied landscape of upland Grotton has always provided the urban dwellers of the plains with much-needed relief from their weekday labours. Here, on the breezy moors or in the sheltered valleys, folk may take their recreation – whether strenuously pitting their wits against nature's guiles (by clinging to rock faces or falling down pot-holes) or simply by informally standing and looking. Naturally, this massive demand for rural relaxation brings with it severe conflicts which the planners are trying to resolve. Recognising this, much of the uplands (rated Category 4d** in the Report of Survey mandatory section on the Environment) have been designated as an 'area of fairly high conservation value in

which there is normally a presumption against most forms of development, as a general rule' – Policy 12.14, Draft Structure Plan.

But the extent of the planning problems in the towns has inevitably meant that the planners have not been able to give the rural areas generally a very high priority. Impatient at the lack of progress by the planning authorities, several local communities have taken direct action to counter what they see as the threat emanating from the towns, and the gradual erosion of their own rural lifestyles. Typical of these is The Council for the Preservation of Rural Cloggley Just as it Was when I Bought my Little Cottage, whose spokesman, opposing at a Public Inquiry a small campsite near a reservoir high above Whitehead, said: 'Of course people need recreation facilities, but wouldn't they all be happier playing bingo or watching football nearer home? Some people just aren't used to fresh air.'

Not all the opposition is organised and one or two individuals have become well-known in local planning offices for their strong views on a whole range of subjects. One such is Sam Nebcliffe, who farms 1½ acres near Spittle in the Bottom and whom we interviewed last summer: 'If any of them townies comes near me I'll set me dog on them' he smiled, chewing a piece of grass and leaning on his milkmaid. 'Them and their bloody dogs, leaving gates open and trampling the turnips. Mind you, I don't mind a few caravans – not at two quid a night I don't – daft buggers.....'

What are the activities of which the local residents complain, and which the planners must clearly take into account in dealing with the problem? The most popular pastime for many people is simply walking. Upland Cloggley, after all, contains two famous long-distance footpaths – the Bogg Trail, which follows the crystal headwaters of the Bogg from Green Gussett to out beyond Low Swillfall Head Boggart Neb, and footpath No 349, which leads from Soldier's Lump to a point about 350 yards further on. The Bogg Trail is of particular significance, since it skirts the Swilldale Nature Reserve, an area which was given special protection because

of the unique presence of a pair of nesting red-kneed twite hawks and a colony of hairy-stemmed gropraw. The twite-hawks have since been re-identified as magpies, but the gropraw is still there, growing vigorously between the tanks of the sewage farm which now occupies the site, and a special hide has been provided which enables visitors to view its remarkable habits. In the skies above, it is not uncommon to see three or four starlings, a sparrow, or even (that rare visitor) the elegant black-headed gull, far from its native refuse dump.

The towering crags of gritstone overlooking the Bogg have long been a mecca for rock climbers. A recent survey for the Structure Plan revealed an average of 4.73 man-metres of climbing per hour on wet November Saturdays, though the cheerful shouts and merry expletives of the hard men of the rocks ring out across the valleys on most week-ends throughout the year. In his response to the Draft Structure Plan, Len Fist, of the Grimethwaite Grit Club, said of the Bogg crags: 'They're effin' great, much 'arder than the bloody Eiger, really knackerin'. I mean, you can get fantastically gripped. I mean.....'

From over the heads of the rock climbers, the surviving hang-gliders launch themselves temporarily into the sky. Elsewhere, the devotees of cross-country motor cycle scrambling, yodelling, naturism and powerboat racing pursue their favourite activities in peace and tranquillity.

According to the planners this intensive use of the rural areas causes serious difficulties because of the conflicts between the urban visitors and the local residents, and between the visitors themselves. As a solution to the problem (apart from the obvious assistance provided by the Structure Plan) the County Council is in the process of establishing a network of Country Parks closer to the urban areas, which are intended to provide a counter-attraction to the traditional beauty-spots. One of these is the Normandy Beeches Country Park which covers an area of some 10 acres, and offers a bewildering array of facilities, including a car park, a picnic table, a nature trail (including a stuffed woodpecker), an

¹ One of these villages in the latter category is now the home of the Cloggley Whole Earth Temple (a group of transcendental nudists, who worship the rain and eat boiled grass).

■ interpretation centre and a stainless steel
■ lavatory. The modest five-year development
■ plan proposes the addition of a stuffed nut-
■ thratch (with coin-operated bird-call), and
■ another picnic table (with seats).

Conscious of the need to back up these facilities with adequate management support, the County has established a Country Park Warden Service whose prime task is to convince people that walking along disused railway lines, or sitting on top of reclaimed pit heaps, is much better for them than going all that way to a National Park somewhere. With similar broad objectives, they have also provided a solution to the problem of access to recreational facilities for those people who do not have a car (and for those who do have a car and can be fooled into getting out of it).

The answer the Council has come up with is 'The Galloping Gurkha', a special bus service which penetrates deep into the Country Parks. 'Grab a Gurk' shriek the posters and maximise your environmental experience'. And people do, in their hundreds. Every weekend the gaily-painted buses rush to and fro ferrying visitors from one team of Job Creation Project interviewers to another.

Favourite haunts of Grotton folk are the many lakes and reservoirs of the moorlands, high above the towns – and, surprisingly, the well-documented mutual antipathy between anglers, water-skiers, sub-aquarists and canoeists is virtually unknown in the area. This happy state of affairs is due less to co-operation between these often conflicting interests than to the fact that the Water Authority have banned public access to every reservoir in the County. While this seems unreasonable at first sight, the Authority is naturally concerned that its extensive concrete dams might be eroded by hordes of feet trampling on them, and it is a measure of their strength of feeling that they recently took out a private summons (for polluting a water catchment area) against two sheep caught relieving themselves behind a boulder.

National Parks

There are no national parks in the County of Grotton¹

Minerals

In the distant past, a number of minerals were worked in the upland areas around Spittle in the Bottom, probably by Cistercian Monks, and undoubtedly without the benefit of planning permission. Today, however, the only significant mineral extraction in these areas takes the form of quarrying for the high quality building stone, for which there is a continuing demand. From the County Council's point of view these activities are of prime importance since they represent the only source of planning applications which no-one can stop them dealing with.

The most significant mineral workings, however, in terms of their importance in the industrial economy and their lasting effect on the environment are found, of course, in the extensive coal deposits around Muckthorpe and Grimethwaite. Though employment in coal mining has gone down², the activities of the National Coal Board still dominate affairs in this part of the County. The Opencast Executive is intending to work across Grimethwaite for the fifth time, and the recent Public Inquiry into this proposal had the surprising side-effect of uniting, probably for the first time ever, the two Councils of Grimethwaite and Grotton County. On the opening day of the Inquiry, Grimethwaite based their opposition to the opencast scheme on the fact that it was always Grimethwaite that was the subject to these proposals; Dunromin, for example, was never subject to this kind of pressure from the Coal Board. The County supported this view. In reply, the Opencast representative argued cogently that Grimethwaite tended to suffer more from coal extraction because it was the only District in the County with coal deposits. He went on, 'However, the

¹ This is despite a long campaign by Peter Rabbit to have part of Cloggley included in the Peak District (and possibly the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, in order to avoid the concentration of pylons, mineral workings, and the like which Cloggley enjoys because of its position adjoining the National Park boundary

² Particularly in deep mines

Opencast Executive would assure the people of Grimethwaite that there is no cause for concern from the environmental point of view. When we've finished working, this site will look just the same as it does now. The only difference is, it'll be the other way up.

One advantage of the widespread quarrying and opencast mining which has taken place in the County is that it has provided sites for the disposal of domestic refuse. However, one of the unexpected side-effects of local government re-organisation has been a sudden increase in the concern of the District Councils for the environmental effects of tipping (happily coinciding with the realisation that the County Council was now responsible for refuse disposal), and this has meant problems in finding acceptable sites. T Break is now prepared to look into any hole that is put before him, but local residents who have the misfortune to live close to likely holes have shown a marked reluctance to welcome the tipping of refuse on their doorsteps – even though much of it (particularly from Dunromin) is of very good quality. Because of these problems, a number of alternative measures are now being considered. The view of Councillor Stanley Grimshaw that domestic refuse should be made into soup, as it was in his day, is not being taken seriously, nor is the pressure from various lefties in the Planning Department for recycling. At present, the Refuse Disposal Department's favourite option (which is to tip in Dingley Dell Nature Reserve) seems to stand the best chance of success.

Derelict Land reclamation

The County Council's current reclamation programme speaks for itself:

	Start date				
	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84
Disused canal Grotton/Muckthorpe ¹	£42,500 ²	—	—	—	—
Milhench Street slag heap Grimethwaite	—	—	—	—	£650,050 ²
Waste ground by police station Letsby Avenue, Boynton	—	—	—	—	£18,46 ²
County Hall car park Grotton	—	—	—	—	£1,225,000 ²

Notes

1 This scheme, which is intended to restore the Muckthorpe Canal to navigation, has currently run into difficulties because of the recent discovery that Grimethwaite Borough Council are well-advanced on filling it in to form a long-distance cycle-way.

2 Starts may be delayed, due to land acquisition problems.

Implementation of rural policies

"Cometh the hour, cometh the Working Party"
(Old RTPI saying)

The wide variety of problems described in the preceding pages clearly demand a peculiar organisational framework if they are to be tackled successfully. In 1975, the County Council uncharacteristically seized the initiative by promptly setting up a number of Joint Working Parties to deal with them but these have not, as yet, seriously impeded progress. For the first three years, the County were the only members to attend these working parties until, late in 1978, word got round that they were now providing chocolate digestives at *every* meeting in County Hall – and, overnight, the mood of the Districts (with the exception of Grimethwaite) changed. (Most of the authorities when holding meetings can manage nothing better than Rover Assorted – though Nigel Smoothe once laid on custard creams for a visiting Japanese delegation – and quite often in Grimethwaite there are no biscuits at all).

As a result, there are now 47 joint working parties, of which the County attend all except that dealing with gypsy caravan sites. Cloggley are represented at all 47 but (for different reasons) neither Grimethwaite nor Golden Delicious have yet felt able to attend a single meeting.



Fig 36

The County Council is also the Refuse Disposal Authority

T Break found out about the whole thing several months after it had started, and decided that the County ought to get involved in Inner Cities because well, because because it was obviously sensible for the County to be involved. Acknowledging, however, that he was a little unclear as to the exact purpose of the whole exercise, he decided to write to N Cumbrance at the DoE for clarification. This was the reply he received:



Ref: NC/JD/38/A/Inp.Cle./38.5/DOE DOT/8.

RECEIVED
15 MAR 1979
Mr. Brink
Mr. Carlson
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Ack'd
Replied

Inner Cities

- (2) You wrote to me on 5th September, 1978, asking me to try to clarify the objectives of the inner city policies as they affect Gtotton. I have now had the opportunity to consider your letter, and would make the following observations.
- (3) The first priority of the Government is, of course, to improve the physical environment of the inner areas. This is of overriding importance in view of the obvious emphasis to be given to the prime objective of reducing unemployment, and this must in turn mean giving high priority to land reclamation and so on. However, perhaps equally important are the people who live in the inner city, and the Government hopes that your own first instance - concentrate - concentrating improving housing conditions, at the same time remembering the equally vital necessity of providing social facilities - libraries, youth clubs and so forth.
- (4) It is, of course, critical to realising the potential of all this investment that good transportation links be maintained and, where possible, enhanced, and we would wish you to give the greatest emphasis to this at the earliest stage. I should also add that, in the particular case of Gtotton, the extreme shortage of recreational and cultural facilities means that a continuing programme of investment in these fields will inevitably be at the top of your list.
- (5) I hope that this will help you to establish your own priorities; in our experience some authorities have failed to do this, and in trying to tackle every issue as they have, of course, failed to deal with any of them properly! My Department will be anxious to ensure that a similar situation will not develop in your own area.
- (6) You ask about additional staff to perform the extra duties which would inevitably flow from taking the opportunities presented by the Government's initiative. I can only remind you that the Government is looking to local authorities to make their contribution towards meeting the most critical national objective at the present time - the vitally important need to achieve a significant reduction in the level of public expenditure. This clearly means that there must be the most severe restriction on local authority staffing levels, and certainly no increase can possibly be justified. The reason for this, of course, is that the Government intends to concentrate all its resources on reducing unemployment.
- (7) I hope this information will be helpful. You may be assured of my Department's continued assistance in this somewhat complex field.

N. Cumbance

N. Cumbance.

There is little doubt that strenuous efforts are being made in Grotton to meet the Government's objectives. Noting that money was available for Industrial Improvement Areas, for example, the County and the two Districts have declared 43 in the last twelve months. Almost every factory in the Partnership Area now finds itself situated in an IIA, and some are in two or three. As yet, however, little progress has been made on the ground (although a building has been partially painted in Omdurman Street, Eckborough).

In the much-studied Grotton Docklands (which is an area of about 30 run-down acres beside the Blether Navigation), most of the land is vacant and already publicly owned. This has encouraged successive attempts by the local authorities to rejuvenate the area but, unfortunately, British Rail wish to retain their landholdings in case the Channel Tunnel is built, the Gas Corporation are reluctant to part with theirs in case North Sea Gas runs out, the Port of Grotton Authority are keeping theirs in case the Blether Navigation is re-opened to shipping, and the CEGB wish to retain theirs just in case. It has now been

decided that the remaining half-acre might as well be landscaped.

In the light of the valuable experience gained in projects such as this, the Partnership Authorities have begun to adopt a more flexible interpretation of their inner city responsibilities. This has allowed them to pursue a range of projects (many of which are situated outside the inner areas as strictly defined) which they see as being compatible with the overall objectives. These schemes include the Disneyland development in Muckthorpe, a new museum of computer technology at Bletherley, and a proposed holiday home for the elderly in Bridlington which had been chopped from the City Council's estimates every year since 1953. The DoE's comments on these schemes are awaited.

(As an important adjunct to their work in this field, the local councils have been firm supporters of such schemes as Job Creation, the Special Temporary Employment Programme, the Youth Opportunities Programme, the Temporarily Work-Free Widened Horizons Project and of course, the Involuntarily-Leisured Mid-Career Retraining

Opportunities Scheme. The authorities see these schemes as a way of giving local people a chance to develop skills which will be of value to them in their future unemployment).



Fig 37 Care will have to be taken to protect the natural amenity of the Docklands area

Chapter 12

The future of
Grotton



Planning in Crisis Conference

Polytechnic of Central Grotton
5-9 September 1979

Notes for delegates

Transport

By Rail

The nearest station still open is at Grotton, Sludge Street. Conference Officials will be on hand to help delegates off the train, and tell them where to go.

By Road

Grotton City Centre is only 14 miles from the M62. However, as there is no link road, the best thing is to use the A6728, the B6909, turn left on to the A6305, past where the Methodist Chapel used to be, then ask.

By Air

Conference delegates are advised against attempting to travel to Grotton by air.

Accommodation

Delegates will be accommodated in the new and luxurious Stanley Grimshaw Hall of Residence in Pussycat Mews, Sleightley, which is only three miles from the Polytechnic. Hot and cold water on many floors. No rucksacks. Please make your own bed.

Meals will be taken in the Winter Gardens, Gas Street (except Breakfast). Please replace trays on racks. Coffee extra. (NB The Winter Gardens is a Grade II Listed Building of great character. Please avoid areas marked 'Keep out — Dry Rot').

Lectures

Repairs to the Poulson Lecture Theatre should be completed in time for conference week. Please arrive early to be sure of a bench.

Facilities for delegates

Medical

If you feel unwell, please do *not* bother the organisers. Grotton Royal Infirmary is in Broncow Lane, next to the newsagents.

Telephones

There are two telephone boxes near the bus station.

Church Services

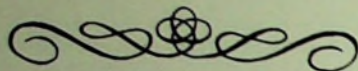
Those wishing to attend church services are advised to visit Grotton Cathedral, Commercial Street (Anglican), or St Vitus's Church (RC), Back Vatican Street, Grimethwaite.

Swimming

There is a Swimming Pool in Grimethwaite, (this has now been declared safe by the Medical Officer of Health).

Anniversary dinner

The menu for the dinner to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the passing of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935 (tickets 50p from Conference Office) appears below:



Menu for T'anniversary Dinner

Potage Brun Windsor

ou
Jus de Prune

Digites de Poisson

Left-œuvres Meunière
Pudding Noir

Grand Poulet Scraggé 'NALGO'
à la crème
(avec stuffing)

ou
Taude dans le Hôte
avec choice de veg

Bombe Surprise Management Team
ou

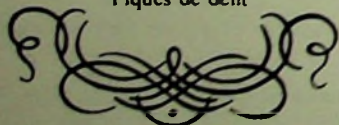
Hadjuk Split
avec

Dique Spotté au cûtarde

eau

Divers émetiques

Piques de dent



Exhibition

The exhibition in the Central Vestibule includes displays by: Anglo-Japanese Adhesives (The Globbo People). Eckborough Crematorium and Meat Pie Co Ltd. Town and County Planning Association (Plastic model of E Howard).

Badges

Badges MUST be worn at all times. There is a reason for this.

Publications

The following are available from the Grotton County Council Publicity Department:

History of Grotton	pp 26	25p
The Problems of Grotton	pp 368	£2.50p
What's On in Grotton	pp 1	3p
This Clogley	pp 12	60p
What to Do in an Air Raid	pp 2	2½d
The Structure Plan — Why it isn't finished	(7th Edn) (gratis)	

Heading for a Crisis?

Remember
you're never alone with

Llewellyn-Davies, Weekes,
Forestier-Walker, Davy,
Brewer, Stewer, Gurney,
Widd'n, Hawke, Cobbley, All,
Bor and Partners!

(Following the dinner, the President will present a paper entitled: 'The Community Land Act — Uthwatt the Doctor Ordered?')

Conference Programme

(Names of speakers yet to be announced)

Tuesday

10.00-11.00 **Development Control — Where we went Wrong**
11.00-12.00 Coffee
12.00-12.30 Discussion
12.30- 2.30 Lunch

Afternoon Free

6.30- 8.00 Dinner
8.30- 9.30 **Population Projections — Have they a Future?**

Wednesday

10.00-11.00 **Structure Plans — Why they have Failed**
11.00-12.00 Coffee
12.00-12.30 Discussion
12.30- 2.30 Lunch

Afternoon — Tours

A — Coastal Scenery of Grotton
B — Historic Grimethwaite
C — Modern Buildings of Ashton-under-Lyne
(Tours commence at 3.30 and return at 4.00)

6.30- 8.00 Dinner
8.30- 9.30 **Local Planning — What's the Point?**

Thursday

10.00-11.00 **Leisure — Is it Worth the Effort?**
11.00-12.00 Coffee
12.00-12.30 Discussion
12.30- 2.30 Lunch

Afternoon Free

6.30- 8.00 Dinner
8.30- 9.30 **Employment — The Disaster to Come**
9.30-10.30 Grotton Roadshow (an Entertainment)

Friday

10.00-11.00 **Transportation — Are we Getting Anywhere?**
11.00-12.00 Coffee
12.00-12.30 Discussion
12.30- 2.00 Lunch
2.30- 3.30 **Life — Is it Worth Living? (T Break)**

Conference Ends

Conference helpers and stewards

A number of members of Grotton County Planning Department have kindly offered to act as stewards at the conference, and are ready to help any delegates who find themselves in difficulties. As an aid to recognition, here are a few descriptive notes:

Mark Thruste

29, smooth, suit. Keen, ambitious. Went to Cambridge, uses long words in Committee reports. Brilliant, incisive, useful for spotting faults in other people's work. Connoisseur of fine wines. Pretends to like chamber music. Renault 4. Holidays in rural France. Wife a former teacher, makes soft toys. Financial Times; beard.

Warren Street

29, architect/aesthete. Lives with a friend. Drinks real ale but doesn't like it. Renovating old house, mainly with wood and Pre-Raphaelite anaglypta. English country dancing. Renault 4. Holidays in Florence. Doesn't dislike planners. Guardian; short, trim beard.

Alison Foot (Ms)

29, long blonde hair, very attractive. Economist, member of Grotton Women's Liberation Front. Objects to rude calendars. Eats developers for breakfast (otherwise vegetarian), makes T Break nervous. Drinks real ale. Stunning (sometimes worries about it). 650 Norton. Rock-climbing in Crete with University don. Guardian; no beard, but would like one.

John 'Jack' Baxter

57, homely, balding, sports jacket, tie! Smells strongly of pipe tobacco. Works in Development Control, begins all conversations with 'Now, there's a history to this site.' Gets diaries from developers at Christmas; thought to get sherry too, but no proof. Four children, two dogs, caravan (Anglesey). Radio ham. Expert on superannuation. Oldish Maxi, grows large marrows, drinks cider. Daily Mail; had beard in Navy.

Dave Sledge

29, thin, aggressive ex-Maoist. Sociologist, but tolerated. Sees Structure Plan as stage in socialist revolution, but prepared to wait. RIG (District Organiser). Spots. Squats. Pot (allotment). Drinks real ale. Denim. No car (ecological reasons) — gets lifts from everybody else. Hitch-hikes to Afghanistan with flat-chested folk-singer. Talks of 'dropping out' but insufficient capital. Socialist Worker, other people's Guardians; thick, messy beard.

Where to go and what to see during conference week

Notes kindly provided by the County Publicity Officer, to whom all queries should be addressed

Museums and Art Galleries

The City Art Gallery

*Corporation Street, Grotton
Admission free*

A permanent exhibition of pictures belonging to the English School, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, and over forty remarkably similar paintings by L. S. Lowry.

Ackroyd Hall

*Follicle Street, Cloggley
No 36 bus, every hour*

A Georgian House built for Jedediah Ackroyd in 1855. The Hall, now run by Cloggley Parks and Cemeteries Department, contains a varied collection of paintings, sculptures and native artefacts assembled by successive Ackroyds until the late Sir Benjamin bequeathed the whole estate to the Borough Council in 1912. (NB Certain works acquired by Sir Benjamin when he was Viceroy of Hyderabad may be viewed, by serious students only, upon written application to the Town Clerk).

Whitehead on t' Bogg Industrial Museum

Cloggley

Director Dr Armitage Shanks

In the village of Whitehead on t'Bogg, three miles north-east of Cloggley Town Centre. Among many exhibits illustrating life at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution is a carefully reconstructed example of James Watt's revolutionary triple-condensing transverse water-jenny.

Grimethwaite Museum of Mining

Station Yard, Grimethwaite

(Closed until further notice, due to subsidence).

Planning in Crisis

Best wishes from the
Department of the Environment!

Authors of Circular 55/77!

Places of Worship

Grotton Cathedral Commercial Street

Visits to the top of the tower (25p) can be arranged if notice is given in advance — applications direct to the Bishop of All The Grottons, See View, Cathedral Close, Grotton, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope. The Cathedral itself contains relics of 5th Grotton Fusiliers, who saw distinguished service on the Limpopo against Faud Pasha, the Woj of Bumf.

Theatre

Coliseum Theatre Victoria Square, Grotton

The resident Repertory Company in 'Flippin' 'eck', a new play by Henry Livings. (Wednesday to Saturday).

Theatre Royal Yorkshire Street, Bletherley

Dunromin Amateur Dramatic Society in the ever-popular 'Stefan Wiensczwyszchik's Mule', by Carl-Zeiss Jena. A few seats left. (Until the 7th, then Bingo, twice nightly).

Music

The Grotton Sinfonia Conductor Hans Pfülling

will give a concert in the Cathedral on 6 September at 7.30. There will be one work, a new Requiem Mass by Sir Michael Tippett, using a setting of the Community Land Act as its text. Seats £2, £1, 7p (unres).

The Ad Nauseam Ensemble

This internationally ignored chamber orchestra will be appearing at local highways depots throughout conference week. Details on the main notice board.

Barry Acne and the Blackheads

Students Union, Grotton Polytechnic, on the 5th. Tickets from the Union Building and Green Custard Records, Cemetery Road.

Cinema

The ABC High Street, Grotton

'Black Emmanuelle's Jaws' (AA) and 'The Wonderful World of Gruyere Cheese' (U).

Taboo Cinema Club

(Strictly members only, address available from the Conference Office)

'Confessions of a Typing-Pool Supervisor' and 'Differential Calculus Swedish-Style'.

Arts Theatre Snodgrass Centre, Bletherley

Takomoto's prize-winning 'Intellectual Pursuits of a Minor Government Official from the Kawaseki District' (X).

The Regal Colliery Street, Grimethwaite As ABC, Grotton.

Sport

Cowpat Park Stadium

Hanseatic League 4th Div: Grotton Academicals Reserves at home to Hyde Rangers (no need to book). 9 September. KO 6.30 pm

The Green

Cramshaw Superior, near Bletherley
1st Annual Gymkhana and Village Fête. Proceeds towards restoration of Scout Hut. 9 September.

Polytechnic Sports Centre Ringmayne Road, Grotton Inner Cities v New Towns (amateur boxing match)

Co-operative Hall

Pioneer Street, Muckthorpe
Grotton County Structure Plan Examination in Public. All seats bookable. St John's Ambulance in attendance. 20 August — 10 December (at least)

Planing in Crisis

Ver Best Wishes From Grotton Co
unity Council!

Where to eat

Royal Grotton Hotel

Station Approach, Grotton

Roomy. Sensible English food. Traditional service (allow 3 hours). High Tea (5/6d) in Cunard Room. string trio in attendance.

The Page and Onion

Sykes Street, Muckthorpe

Pies, mushy peas, Ruddock's Old Best from the wood. Lady entertainer every other Friday. Informal.

Vieux Chapeau

1 The Square, Grotton

French cuisine (ie greasy snails, etc), authentic bistro atmosphere. Do not offend manager.

Boggart Clough Forest Lodge

Cloggley

Smorgasbord on draught. Gay, Tyrolean (Thursday – Bavarian Night). German-style lager. (Not recommended).

Parks and Gardens

Of the many fine parks throughout the County, the following are of particular interest:

Grime Valley Country Park

Over a mile of temporarily-landscaped slag-heaps adjoining the Muckthorpe-Grimethwaite Road. Rare orchids, motorcyclists.

Carbuncle Hall Office Park

Boynton Road, Dunromin

Interesting examples of Twentieth Century office-blocks, several with landscaping.

Personal services

Just Sid, Hairstylist

3 Side Street, Grimethwaite

Grimshaw's Central Massage Parlour

Internal Relief Road, Grotton

(Ask for our special assisted chiropody service).

PLANNING IN CRISIS?

SOLVE IT WITH A **NEW TOWN!**

GOOD LUCK FROM THE TOWN AND
COUNTRY PLANNING ASSOCIATION!

After the Conference, why not

'Meat' Your Friends

at

J. Higgins & Son

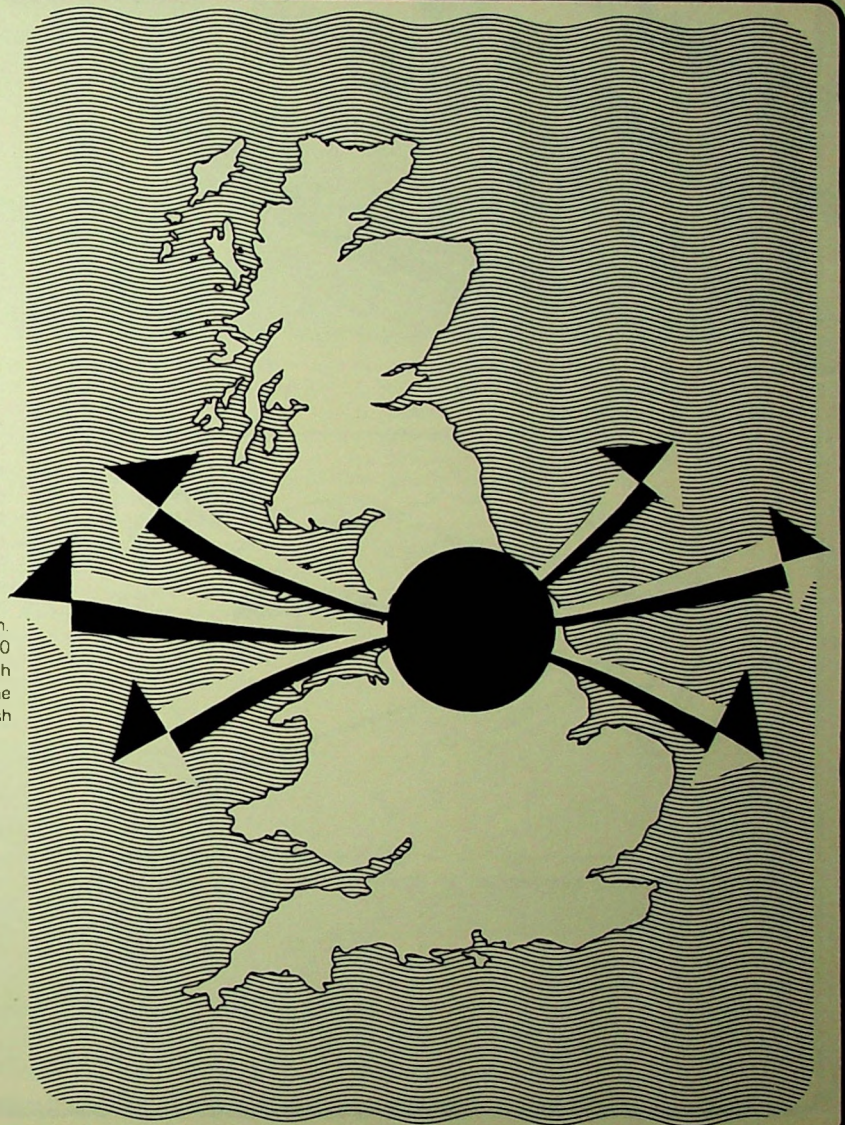
Family Butchers,

20 Regent Street,

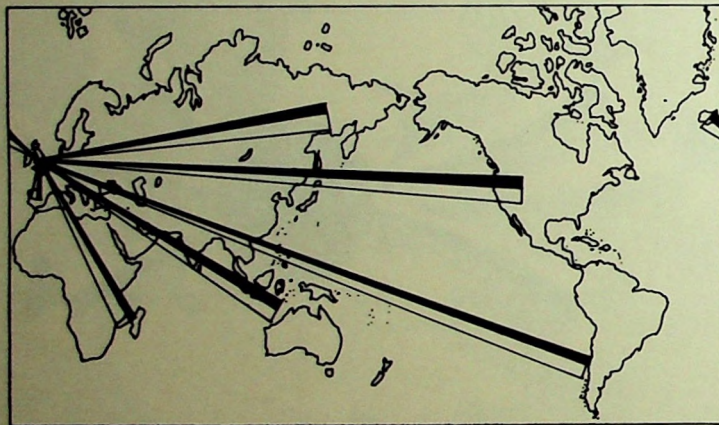
Bletherley

Grotton Pivot of Britain

Grotton is equidistant from London, Edinburgh, Belfast, and a point on the North Sea about 50 miles east of Grimsby. Situated within easy reach of the national motorway network Grotton, the seventh largest Metropolitan County in the British Isles, is superbly located.



Grotton Gateway to Parts of Europe



Grotton - almost the centre of World trade

Remarkable sites for industry and offices, within easy reach of the national motorway network, abound, and the cheerful, friendly workforce (who hardly ever go on strike) are eager for employment. Regular services are available to America, the Middle East, Valparaiso, etc., from Manchester Airport (only half an hour via the national motorway network) or the Blether Navigation (which at one time could handle shipping up to 170 tonnes). Equidistant from north, south, east and west, Grotton offers a pan-European location of unparalleled convenience. It was until recently a major rail junction, and overnight roll-on/roll-off ferry services to Scandinavia are available from nearby Hull, which via the easily-reached national motorway network, can be reached in under an hour or thereabouts.

Within 200 miles of Grotton there is a market of some 50 million people - truly an impressive statistic, and one which gives Grotton the edge over its rivals. These potential customers - conveniently served via the national motorway network - have a potential spending power of, ooh, millions of pounds.

The Place The People



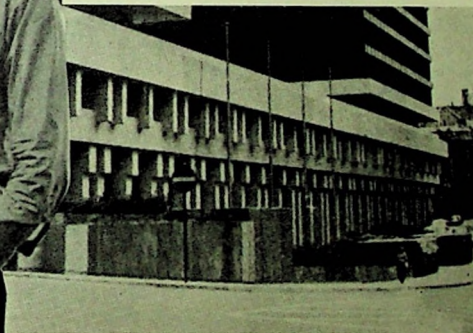
Grotton, of course, grew mainly in the nineteenth century, as a result of the textile industry. But so much for history! What is Grotton like today?

The Regional Capital, serving a wide area, the City of Grotton has a population of nearly 200,000. Here is a true metropolis, and its size means that the level of accommodation, management services, and other resources is of unparalleled adequacy. The town centre is large yet compact. The modern shopping precincts blend harmoniously with the Victorian warehouses and inter-war offices to give the town its distinctive character. Shopping facilities range all the way from Burtons to John Collier, from Dolcis to Timpson's.

The adaptability of Grotton folk to changing technology is a by-word, and the Polytechnic provides a constant stream of industrially-orientated graduates who want nothing more than to work hard for a living. Secretaries and typists are also ten a penny.

Housing is very cheap, especially in the characterful Grimethwaite area. Depending on where your house is, you may be able to cycle to work in less than half an hour.

Grotton is superbly located, and as you will be close to the national motorway network, the world is at your feet - Blackpool, Snowdonia, the Norfolk Broads are all within easy reach.



Grotton has an interesting range of industrial sites available, situated strategically to take advantage of the planned expressway link to the national motorway network, and if your industry is a little on the dirty or smelly side, Grimethwaite's the place for you!

Grotton Even Welcomes Foreigners



Grotton - Le Pivotal de Grande-Bretagne! Grotton - Le Gateway à Quelques Morceaux d'Europe!

Venez à Grotton pour les sites magnifiques d'industries et d'offices! Grotton est près du network nationale d'autoroute et elle a une location stratégique au centre d'Europe (plus ou moins). Les attractions de Grotton sont très obvieuses. La région a une population près de 50 million dans 200 miles, et la ville est juste au sud de l'M62 - le route à Hull, Liverpool, et le monde. Pratiquement tout les formes de loisir sont dans Grotton, et les maisons sont très raisonnables. Venez à Grotton avec votre industrie. C'est près du network nationale d'autoroute. C'est le pivot d'Europe et le tout monde!

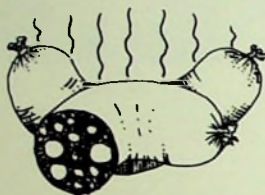
Pourquoi pas contactez Wendie Maison pour les détails?

Why not bring your business to Grotton?
Speak to our Industrial Development Officer, Wendy House. She will be pleased to answer your questions in the deepest possible depth. Give her a ring - we're in the book!

Grotton - The Pivot of Britain - The Pan-European City

Grotton - Poised for Growth!

You will be welcome. And, of course, you will have easy access to the national motorway network.



Grotton - Das Kapital von Gross Britannien!

Grotton - Der Cockpit von Europa!

Kommen Sie mein Herr zu Grotton für wunderbar industrielles Eschtales, superbisches Offizes und Lebensraum. Grotton ist nicht far von die Autobahns von den Vaterland und er hat eine Lokaltzion schmack in der Mitte von dem Reich! Die Attraktions von Grotton sind Gott im Himmel gut! Das kilometers, und die Stadt is nur ein bisschen sud von dem M62 - der Weg zu Hull, die Welt und Ashton-unter-den-Lunden! Grotton hat praktisch alle die Dingen für das gute Leben, und die Hauser sind nicht Jerry-bild!!

Kommen Sie zu Grottnberg mit votre Faktorie!!
Es ist die Autobahnschnellesnetworkkesinter-nazionalezentrum!!

Mein Papa, Grotton ist das Kapital von Europa und dem Milchig Weg!!!

Warum nicht kontakte Vendi Haus für die In-formationen!!!!

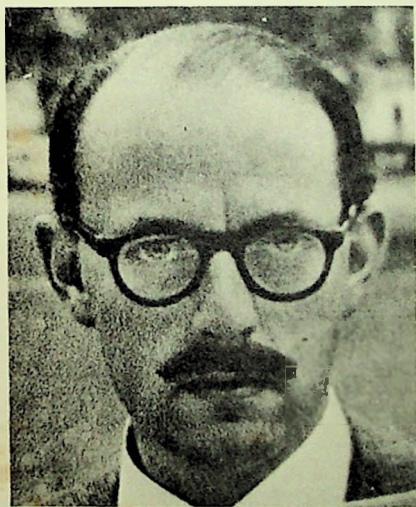


مع اسرائيل هي معركة الامة العربية
ر الخارجه الشيخ صباح الاحمد الى
ومنها الى بغداد تحسسا من الكويت
كل منا بود ان يطول ويطول بلا نهاية
ضالته عند صاحبه فقد كان يسالني
ت وشعرنا واحد واحد مـاذا
الادبي 50 الميدان الوطني ؟ وكانت
سرعة واسعة بسبب مواكبته الى 200
الكويت وكنت بدوري M62 عن
ن يجيني اجابة الخير المتجرد مسن
يرسم لي عن كل اديب من الادباء
جانب ما يتحلى به اديبنا ابو الفاسم
ث فهو لا يرضى عن نفسه الا اذا كتب
بحثا في الادب المعاصر لذلك تجمع من
فيها الحق وغيبا المؤلف وهو شديد
البحوث زاهد في كتابة المقالات على انه
? فنه عليه مكا Wendy Tent فهو

Appeal by N Cumbrance
Regional Director, Department of the Environment

I am grateful for the opportunity provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute to make this appeal on behalf of the Wilfred Burns Convalescent Home for distressed DoE planners in Bridlington. (It's a sort of planning appeal, really). The purpose of the home is to provide shelter from the everyday stresses and strains so prevalent in the modern, high-speed world of the Department of the Environment.

I can best illustrate the work of the home, which has seen many sad case histories, by telling you of one of the saddest of all – that of Gilbert Small. Gilbert wishes to remain anonymous, to spare his family from embarrassment, so we'll call him Dennis Small, though his real name is Gilbert Small and he lives at 3 Proposed Intermediate Ring Road, Grotton. Let him tell the story in his own words:



Gilbert Small, who wishes to remain anonymous

I Joined the Civil Service straight from Oxford. Like everyone else, I was attracted by the romance, the adventure, the danger and, of course, the beautiful women. I'd always wanted to be my own boss. Those were the good times. I had my own little office, a potted plant (African Violet Grade III), a hanger for my coat, and even a chair.

My boss was a Deputy Permanent Principal Under-Secretary – and he was mean, sadistic, and particularly rude to Local Government Officers. Naturally, I wanted to be like him. I suppose you could say he was my idol really. I'll never forget, one afternoon, he just sat down and wrote the Local Government Act. That two hours' work caused total chaos the length and breadth of the country; naturally, a CBE soon followed.

I knew it was difficult for me to live up to an example like that, but I had to try. I began quietly at first, just writing the odd advice note, then when nobody was looking I would add an Appendix on to a Circular, and just occasionally I might manage to slip away to the lavatory and re-draft bits of the GDO. But it wasn't long before I began to get into a bit of trouble. One night I took a complete draft circular home with me. I didn't mean it any harm, I just wanted to be near it. Then, before I knew what was happening, it was two or three every night, then it was whole armfuls. It was so easy – because of course whatever was the 'in' thing at the time, the Department would be preparing a few circulars on it, just to show they'd been reading the Guardian. I simply used to re-draft them so that they were totally incomprehensible – not that they needed very many alterations. I was only trying to help.

But I didn't see what was happening to me until it was too late – disaster was on the way. I was determined to write an Act of Parliament – it would be the ultimate experience. I'll never forget that day. I think I must have had a heavy lunch in the DoE canteen, perhaps the odd gin – you can imagine the sort of thing – and it happened. I wrote the Community Land Act during my tea break. You see, for weeks before I'd been rescuing bits of other people's Acts from the wastepaper basket and I just stuck

them all together, and there it was. Of course, I was hoping to achieve the sort of chaos my old boss had managed with his Act. But it didn't happen. Everybody just ignored it. I was shattered. It was the end of a dream.

His colleagues did what they could for him. Naturally they tried promoting him, but it was too late. He went from bad to worse. By now it was affecting his family; he used to get his wife to dress up as a Statutory Instrument. She tried hard to come to terms with it but it was the old story – she finally ran off with a Chartered Surveyor. For Dennis, it was the end of the world. And that's where Bridlington comes in.

Here, in the peace and calm of the home, Dennis is assured of the loving care and attention of a devoted staff. Along with the many other residents, he can now look forward to living out his days protected from the pressures and strains of the world outside.

I am sure you will be touched, as I am, by this story and if you search your hearts you will be able to feel compassion for the civil servants of this world. Help us to help them. If you have a spare memorandum, a rubber stamp perhaps, a hat-stand, a piece of red tape, please send them to me, N Cumbrance, at the DoE, Grotton, and I'll pass them on. It means so little to you, but so much to the poor souls incarcerated in Bridlington. Please give generously.

Have you ever tried to get planning permission for a nice front porch, and discovered that it sterilised the nation's mineral reserves? Or that it threatened the County Council's new Structure Plan? Perhaps the Town Hall asked you to provide further details about the number of floors in your bungalow? Or maybe your application simply disappeared without trace.....

This is the sort of thing that the long-suffering citizens of Grotton have (like everyone else) learned to take in their stride - for them, planners have become part of the fabric of modern living, rather like yoghurt, or putty. Indeed, not an eyelid was batted when their much-maligned County Planning Officer, the hapless T Break, first brought Grotton to the notice of the Ombudsman when he unhesitatingly recommended the granting of temporary permission for the demolition of a listed building.

It seems scarcely creditable that what is commonly believed to be the

world's smallest Metropolitan County should display within its boundaries every intractable planning problem known to Man - and several that haven't yet occurred to him. So perhaps it is hardly surprising, given this gloomy legacy, that the Planning Departments of the County are full of people who only stay in Grotton because they can't get jobs anywhere else.

How do they keep going, this gallant bunch of bureaucrats? What, apart from the prospect of an inflation-proof pension, do they have to look forward to? With the kind of cool detachment which comes only from many years in local government, the authors of this unique book (who themselves work for a large planning authority not all that far from Grotton) reach some surprising conclusions which are of direct relevance to anyone who is a town planner, or who knows one, or who knows somebody who knows one.

